SLINGSHOT

# Life Wish / Death Wish

## Activism as Spirtuality

By Crow

I had the opportunity to participate in a Sun Dance in Mexico this summer which helped to purge the negativity that I've been carrying for a long time. When I am at my best, my activism is purely an expression of my spirituality, and I feel very much recharged. I am hoping to bring some positive energy.

I have the feeling that a lot of people are very drained of their libidinal energy. The meaning of the word libido is life-wish, and I think that right now the political mood is more one of a death-wish.

I remember many times where my passion for my activist work was very much akin to the passion that one carries into an exciting new romance, an energy that comes from a seemingly inexhaustible force coming from within, yet not coming from oneself, but from a source much greater than oneself. In the moments I identify with this source of energy as my true nature, rather than the person who is desirous. Essentially my desire in these moments is to be of service, and in this is the true joy that sustains me, for it is desire born of love, the desire that is fulfilled in giving of myself for the benefit of the Great Other, who is really no Other at all, for we are all ultimately one, and all illusion of separateness is born of ignorance of our true nature. And this is what I return to, and what I must return to, in order to maintain my hope in a world that seems dead-set on destroying itself.

What I was taught, and what I took to heart, is that prayer and ceremony must precede action, and that the intention that inspires action will create results corresponding to that intention. And so I believe that this movement needs spiritual guidance, needs to be guided by love, and the wisdom that comes from a practice of love, as a way of seeing and

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# Calm Down & Fight

## Values For The End Times

By Jesse D. Palmer

Please take a deep breath with me, and try not to freak out. A lot of people are getting paralyzed with relentless scary apocalyptic news and too much social media exposure. This constant level of negative distraction is causing anxiety, depression, and preventing us from focusing on making coherent plans to fight back. This is not an accident. Those in power want to terrify us. They want to dominate the narrative and framing of what's going on. They want to keep us focused on reacting to the latest outrage so we're constantly off balance. Computer companies make money the more we stare at our phones, and so these tools manipulate our emotions to keep us hooked up.

We do not have to live like this – in a world organized around fear, division, scarcity, control and dehumanizing technology. We can create structures based on cooperation, justice, harmony with nature, freedom, generosity, playfulness and connection not alienation.

The most important shift is psychological – calming our minds and believing in our collective power. The slogan "we are the 99%" is still right on. The unjust system serves a few thousand billionaires at the expense of everyone else. Without our labor, our consent, our going along with the machine, this rotten system can be swept away.

Even though ecological collapse seems overwhelming and too far along to resist, giving up in defeat, resignation and sadness will not help – doing so throws away any slim chances we might have. While the current system is suicidally unsustainable, it might not be too late to save some things. We have the knowledge and technology to get along without destroying our planet – but those in power make so much money and get so much power from the way things are that they are sacrificing the future while we watch feeling grim and helpless.

Since our collective psychology is the key out of this mess, our first task is to ground ourselves – calm our minds – and think our own thoughts rather than reacting to hypnotizing bad news from our cell phones.

We need to shift our focus to what we want, not what we're against. And beyond our interior thoughts, we need to articulate our values and discuss them widely with our friends, our family, our neighbors.

It is crucial to recognize that life, other people, the earth, and the experiences our lives offer are good, pleasurable, beautiful, worthwhile and meaningful. While politicians

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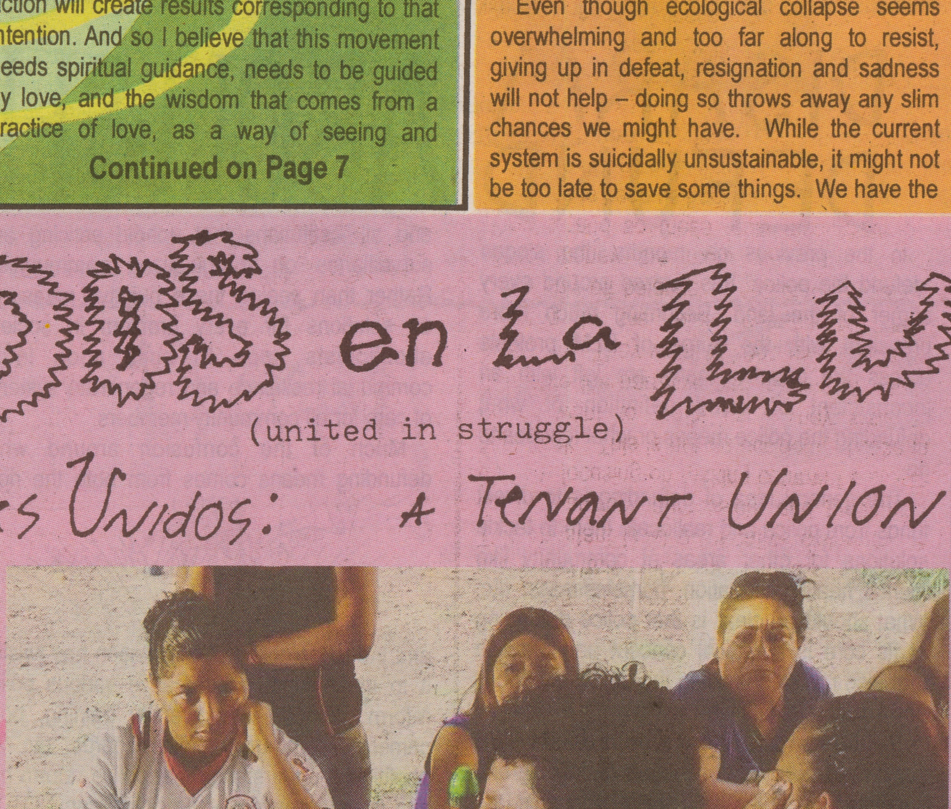
# UNIDOS en La LUCHA

(united in struggle)

## Residentes Unidos: A TENANT UNION STORY

By Leslie Valentine

*I wrote this in order to archive the process that took place in organizing a tenants' union in hopes that you will learn something from our mistakes and successes. I believe all stories of resistance serve as a catalyst for a better world, helping us sharpen our methods. This story takes place on stolen land, the land of the Creeks and Cherokee peoples, currently known as Atlanta.*



As I swung the front door to leave my apartment, I found a red letter taped to my door and read the words capitalized in bold: "$350.00 Patio fine; we will only accept a certified check or money order; we will not under any circumstances accept next month's rent if it does not include this amount". I lit up with fury and came to the conclusion that this must be a mass eviction, as there has been construction noise every morning from the green, gentrification paved walking path at the steps of our apartment complex called the Beltline. It had already demolished and flattened much of Atlanta's Black elder's homes in the name of "eminent domain" for so-called progress. As if we hadn't been slapped by gentrification hard enough this year, with tech's 'live work play' industry taking over and most of the Los Angeles film industry relocating to Atlanta for the tax exemption the city offered them. Not to mention, the Super Bowl that was hosted here in February.

As I chain smoked outside, I thought of what my next steps were going to be. All of a sudden I noticed a lot of people in the parking lot with their red letters and some were asking for help with translating. Even though roughly 97% of the neighborhood did not speak English, every red letter was written in English. A lot of the community members here, off of Buford Hwy, are originally from Mexico, Central and Latin American countries, China, Korea, and Vietnam.

We all came to find that we were all frustrated with the landlords long before the fines and threats of evictions happened.

After some more shit-talking and beers, I went back inside to start digging deeper. I read through the lease agreement looking for any information I could find about fines and I researched tenants' rights in Georgia.

There's a knock on the door, who is it so late? At the peephole is my neighbor Yami and they have some exciting news. Yami had mobilized residents at the apartment complex they lived at last year. That tenants' union had worked alongside the grassroots tenants rights' organization called Los Vecinos de Buford. Yami called their friend in Los Vecinos and we started to devise a plan.

Morning came. Yami and I had some coffee while creating forms to go door to door with. The forms were to gather information such as a contact, if they were given a red

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# SLINGSHOT

*Slingshot* is an independent radical newspaper published in Berkeley since 1988.

For people of conscience, life in the US is an ongoing nightmare. Making *Slingshot* is just one way to address the myriad issues. Yet the issues rarely get better and a question persists how much our efforts are changing things and if at all.

We're not smart enough to figure everything out and we're a tiny collective so we don't have the resources to cover every issue that's important to us. We have no magic solutions for all the world's problems. No one does. During these post-reality times, it is important to say that out loud and be humble about what any individual or group of people can do. Because to pretend otherwise just makes us all feel even more paralyzed, anxious and isolated. Nevertheless, we decided to make this paper.

Publications like everything are judged by their worst qualities. Publishing half ass shit written by people who only have a partial grip on their subject is a *Slingshot* tradition. It is grassroots and allows unheard voices to be heard and sometimes is cute, but to some it feels tone-deaf and disconnected now given the risks and stakes we're facing.

The anxiety and uncertainty of the pandemic, wildfire smoke and rising fascism made it hard for us to concentrate on making this issue. We've needed more time for self-care, which takes time away from writing and editing.

Because it has felt like everything around us is coming to a head while we were making the issue, it was hard knowing the paper would be tragically incomplete and imperfect — missing so many topics and so many voices. We've been gripped with doubt and we kept putting off finishing perhaps in the hope that if we waited, some of the missing pieces might magically be filled. This isn't the last word or the full statement of what we're thinking about.

*Slingshot* is different from the internet — there is a months-long gap between us writing something and anyone reading it. We can't respond to each twist and turn. We couldn't talk about the election (or post-election fascist coup?), because by the time the paper got mailed, it would all be different.

Because of the pandemic, a lot of our normal distribution channels are not working. So if you like what you see in here, you could really help us by emailing us places we can send our paper. Also, more and more stuff is read on-line, so it would really help if you can link to articles you like in your internet world. They are all on the Slingshotcollective.org website.

Shout out to Mike Lee & Aragorn!, people we know who died since last issue.

We dropped the ball on certain key topics, namely, demonstrating how we show up for Black lives. We believe this is indicative of Slingshot priorities, or lack thereof. There is a lack of new and diverse voices in the collective. As our reality becomes more and more dire, we want and need your voice to capture the multiplicities our movements require.

With this issue done, we reprioritize the challenge of how to engage the voices that have been few and far between — namely those of people of color who spearhead paradigm shifting movements. If we are real about our dreams for revolution, it is incredibly clear that we cannot go back to normal, and thus neither can *Slingshot* in the way we move forward.

We're a collective, but not all the articles reflect the opinions of all collective members. We welcome debate and constructive criticism.

Thanks to the people who made this: Alexis, Alina, Caroline, Cleo, Dov, egg, Elke, Fern, Gina, Hannah, Jesse, Joey, Juhlz, Kathryn, Rachelle and all the authors and artists!

### Slingshot New Volunteer Meeting

Volunteers interested in getting involved with *Slingshot* can come to the new volunteer meeting on January 17, 2021 at 7 pm at the Long Haul in Berkeley (see below.)

### Article Deadline & Next Issue Date

Submit your articles for issue 133 by February 6, 2021 at 3 pm. (we might do a fascist coup emergency issue, too, and if we do we'll announce a deadline on-line)

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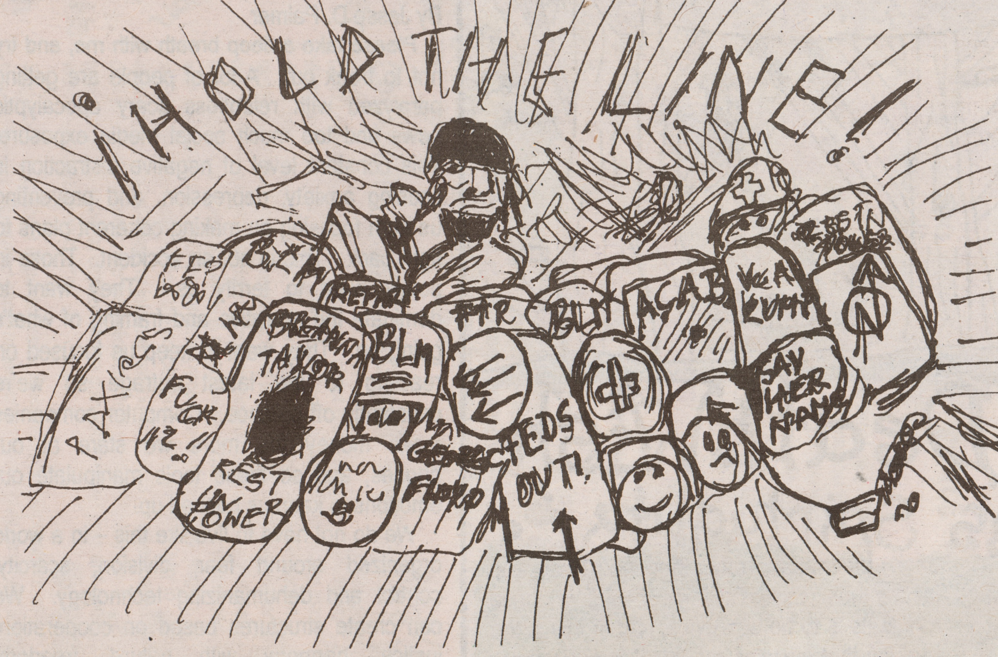
# BLACK LIVES MATTER

There is no doubt that the Black Lives Matter protests over the last six months have been historic. For many folks from small towns and suburbs, this was the first social justice protest they had seen or participated in. The collective fire was lit and we saw many BIPOC (Black, indigenous and people of color) organizers and activists funnel that energy into creating grassroots organizations for racial equality where they did not exist before. All of us who work with *Slingshot* saw each other at the huge protests across the Bay — at times choking on gas while marveling that this was happening on such a scale, everywhere all at once.



Protesting against racist police brutality is not new. It is what animated the Black Panther Party in the 1960s. The Rodney King uprisings in 1993 were also national, huge and based on videotaped police abuse. That was almost 30 years ago and police violence still disproportionately targets BIPOC. There is such a long list of Black "say their names" — stretching back for years and years. This movement continues the fight and legacy of radical movement work led by Black people.

As the months progressed and the demonstrations have decreased, we must ask ourselves how we can stay plugged into the struggle. Especially for white folks who posted, donated, and attended protests — how does this moment transform from a secular self-gratifying time into a commitment to anti-racist work?

For many non-Black folks, the past few months have revealed their own complicity in the systems that kill Black people. Social media flooded waves of info-graphics about different facets of anti-blackness. Yet the work can't stop there. There are only so many words that can fit on a screen and it would be idealistic to say that all of our political education could come from engagement on social media.

Anti-Racist WORK is not optional; SILENCE is COMPLICITY with anti-blackness and white supremacy.

Race is an arbitrary social construct, but what comes out of it — racism, white supremacy, discrimination and oppression — is real and complex. Below what is visible on the surface are layers upon layers of a historical process that all find their center in anti-blackness. The murders of unarmed Black and Brown folks by police are only one culmination of this incredibly pervasive system. This system is built into every single aspect of society. If we truly want to see Black liberation we need to be plugged in for more than a few weeks.

To continue in the struggle, folks have to become comfortable with being uncomfortable. Acknowledging your position in perpetuating anti-blackness is key to understanding how to dismantle it. For white folks, this means recognizing and accepting how you fully benefit from white supremacy. For non-Black people of color, this work is similar, but not the same. You recognize the oppression under which you exist, but you also must accept that you too benefit from your proximity to whiteness. This self-analysis is also not confined to race, and must include analysis of gender, sexuality, and class to be meaningful.

The education that we take upon ourselves has to transfer over into the discussions we have with family and friends. These discussions aren't comfortable either, but are necessary. If we as non-Black folks fail to do that labor — who are we leaving it to? It is up to all of us to step in and continue this (re)education.

With all the physical, emotional and intellectual labor that has been provided by BIPOC, we owe it to everyone to put in the work (on) ourselves.

Participation in anti-racist work is participation in transformation of the system. This takes no set path and for those of us who have not done this work before, it can be pretty daunting to try to find a practice when we have been so conditioned. Aside from individually educating yourself, there are various other ways you can join the movement. Other issues like gender equity, climate change, houselessness, immigration, and everything else ALL intersect with anti-racist work! The options of how to plug in are truly limitless!

Anti-racist work is not optional; silence is complicity with anti-blackness and white supremacy.

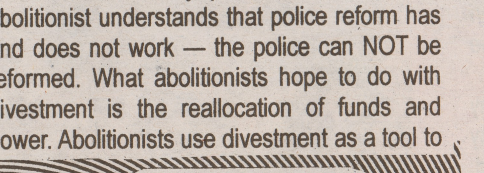
# DISARM DEFUND ABOLISH THE POLICE

In the previous six months, the slogan "defund the police" has buzzed around every corner of the land. Becoming much more prevalent with the surge of BLM protests across the country, many are left with an inconsistent or jaded definition of what defunding the police means or what it hopes to do.

The general idea of defunding is to divest funds from police and reallocate them to tackle solutions for other areas of community like mental health, education, homelessness, etc. What should be clear is that police defunding at its core is a radical concept and practice that also requires tackling the unjust economic and social relations we exist in

Police and prison abolitionists are concerned with the destruction of policing and surveillance. In the US, these concepts are historically rooted in the oppression of the poor and people of color. Abolition includes the destruction of prisons, jails, the military — any and all institutions that uphold policing and surveillance on marginalized communities. Rather than seeing these punitive measures as solutions for every problem in society, abolitionists hope to build upon intra-communal resilience and regenerate systems of care for all community members.

Much of the confusion around what defunding means comes from both the right and the left. Neoliberal co-optation has twisted it to mean funding alternative various police reform methods like diversity training, body cameras, community police boards, etc. An abolitionist understands that police reform has and does not work — the police can NOT be reformed. What abolitionists hope to do with divestment is the reallocation of funds and power. Abolitionists use divestment as a tool to decrease the reach of police and the Prison-Industrial Complex (PIC). The divestment of funds goes towards the implementation of alternative methods of community care. While such is occurring, abolitionists work towards the decriminalization of areas like drug use, mental health, homelessness, and sex work. Not only to keep vulnerable communities safe, but to destroy the viewpoint that police and prison is the solution for these areas. This work continues until police and prisons no longer serve a purpose and can be superseded by the community systems.



An abolitionist framework is transformative and incredibly imaginative, as abolition itself can take many different forms. Organizations like Critical Resistance and Anti-Police Terror Project are tackling prison abolition and taking police out of Oakland schools. With the idea of care at its center, abolition truly challenges what "rehabilitation" means if it is currently occurring in jails and prisons across the nation. Divestment is only one facet in the larger network of abolition — but it is absolutely necessary.

## a message to our incarcerated subscribers

**What we do:** We provide free subscriptions to incarcerated individuals in the US who request them. We only publish 2-3 times a year, so there will be up to a 6 month delay between when you request a subscription and when you get a paper. We do accept submissions of art and articles from incarcerated subscribers but we only publish a very, very tiny fraction. We don't publish poetry or fiction, and only run personal narratives or stories about your case if they are framed within radical analysis.

**What we don't do:** we are unable to provide penpals, legal aid/advice, financial assistance, literature besides Slingshot, or respond to requests for other kinds of help. Usually, we can't write you back. We cannot use JPay or other inmate email services.

**Comrades on the outside:** We receive 5-10 letters from incarcerated folks every day. We welcome help reading them and processing subscription requests! — Love, Slingshot

## Circulation information

Subscriptions to *Slingshot* are free to prisoners, low income, or anyone in the USA with a Slingshot Organizer, or $1 per issue. International $3 per issue. Outside the Bay Area we'll mail you a free stack of copies if you give them out for free. Say how many copies and how long you'll be at your address. In the Bay Area pick up copies at Long Haul and Bound Together books, SF.

# Beyond the Superhero

# The Rise of the Superweaver

by The Indigenous Futures Collective

**The year is 2020.**

For nearly a century, superheroes have been policing the planet. In their incessant hunt for villains, the heroes have destroyed ecosystems, decimated communities, left countless dead and millions imprisoned.

As public attention and investor funds keep flowing towards the superheroes, escalating cycles of violence continue...

But from the shadows, a different lifeway is beginning to emerge, a different way of knowing...

**Enter the superweaver.**

Where community is thriving—

Where bellies are full and the old teachings are revitalized—

Where lush biodiversity is blooming—

You'll often find a superweaver there.

She is sometimes hard to spot because she never works alone—she partners with communities, with nature, with seen and unseen parts of the weave. She sets about her tasks skillfully, her keen eyes focused on what she knows needs to be done, her many arms (both seen and unseen) reweaving social and ecological well-being.

**Who is this unmasked woman?**

Superweavers hold together the social fabric, working across communities to understand and meet their needs, building dynamic, reciprocity-based networks.

A superweaver has no need for "good and evil." Rather, her universe is dynamic and rich, impossible to parse into neat polarities.

She has a special talent for identifying individual and systemic needs and helps organize dynamic infrastructure to address the troubles she perceives.

Superweavers aren't always indigenous women, but more often than not, when a superweaver is standing in front of you, it's going to be an indigenous woman.

She flexes fluency in the latest technology, even as the ancient elders whisper forgotten languages in her dreams.

Superweavers can be found across the globe doing their dynamic restorative work.

A superweaver does not hide behind masks, uniforms, or alter egos. Rather, she is radically herself, radically situated within her own culture and environment, entangled with and bound to community. At the core of her work is the process of becoming more and more herself, a process that she knows cannot happen under self-concealment.

Superweavers do not believe in "self-sacrifice." It is from her generosity towards herself that she builds a healthy set of expectations for others. She is quick to intervene if someone is using self-denial as an excuse to deprive others. A superweaver sees self-sacrifice as a tragedy, not an aspiration.

She is skilled at holding space, at helping stories find a home, and helping the unheard feel listened to.

She is careful to avoid attracting attention to herself unless she needs it, but she also isn't afraid to be seen.

A superweaver refuses to be transformed into a "savior," and she knows that if this happens, she has failed in her work. A superweaver wants to be part of communities in which everyone is empowered to play many roles, meaning that no one person or group monopolizes the "savior" role. She understands that any time someone disproportionately presents themselves as a savior, it is because violence is holding their ability to play that role in place.

A superweaver will never tell you to be brave, but rather, let you know it's okay to be scared.

As she works, she doesn't just think seven generations in the future, she thinks seven millennia.

A superweaver knows that "A stitch in time saves nine"—that if we build sustainable infrastructure now, it will save us from great suffering in the future.

The superweaver teaches that there is no such thing as a zero-sum game. She knows it is a myth that "one person must suffer for another's gain." One person's suffering is everyone's suffering—it tears the weave. Life on this planet is a collective project, "We are all in this together, and when we weave our ways well, everybody wins."

When things are seeming dull, she stirs the pot by bringing together old friends.

When someone is losing motivation, she knows just when to nudge them, to bring them a plate of food and check in on how they are doing, about the project they were trying to get off the ground. But she knows that if she lets herself get stressed and overburdened, her nudges will stop being helpful and become a form of harm. This is why taking care of herself is such a big priority. She understands the value of rest.

Rather than thinking she must rescue the world from some future calamity, the superweaver understands that the calamity has already happened in the form of genocide, ethnocide, ecocide, cultural erasure and colonization. Her work is about removing systems of blight that hold asymmetrical power-relations in place. Her work is to repair social relations so that what is left of the ecologies and cultures of the planet can recover and heal. In this way, superweaver narratives might be considered part of the "solarpunk" or "hope punk" movement.

She brings a richness to everything she touches.

She is someone who inhabits many spaces, who moves between worlds.

She acts from a place of mutual aid: "Your liberation is my liberation!" Those she works with aren't "victims" to be rescued, but rather have their things of their own to teach and offer. She is likewise acutely aware of the way asymmetrical power relations are forced upon Black and Indigenous People of Color, and because of this, her most common accomplices are those who are not privilege-blind, but rather, who are part of BIPOC communities themselves.

She is constantly challenged by those who she works towards co-liberation with, as she builds reciprocal relationships that constantly gain new layers of meaning. She understands that the process of decolonization is messy, but that you have to be present for the mess of it if you wish to truly repair the weave.

**Towards seeing and celebrating her.**

We celebrate superweavers of the past, like Changunak Antisarlook Andrewuk, aka "Sinrock Mary, Queen of Reindeer," (1870-1948) of the Inupiat people who defied sexist, racist colonial laws to build infrastructure to support herself and her community while preserving land and traditional ways.

The notion of the superweaver pushes back against colonial binaries of hero/victim that privilege white supremacy and hetero-patriarchy. Instead, the superweaver recognizes that often the work of weaving is one that builds towards sustainability and resiliency through a generative structure, wherein those who have been harmed or "victimized" are allowed a path toward healing, as are those who have perpetuated violence towards an individual or community. Only in this way—through a restorative form of justice—can we truly reweave our relationships to each other, our communities, our ecologies, and our planet.

In the shadow of the superheroes, superweavers do their work, tirelessly building relationships between their communities, environment, and traditions, reinventing the economy in their quest towards making a lush, prosperous reality in which everyone thrives for seven thousand generations to come.

We celebrate superweavers of the present, like Tehontsiiohsta Meadow Cook of the Mohawk people, who has been building youth-led infrastructure in the fight to decelerate climate change while working to develop food sovereignty and bring attention to the superfund sites on Mohawk land that are poisoning her people.

We celebrate the superweavers of the future who will be forced to contend with the world we set in place for them.

**#SuperweaverRising**

We call upon artists to lift up the stories of superweavers, to draw attention to the superweaver archetype, and to carry us into the new paradigms that emerge when we center her story and her way of knowing.

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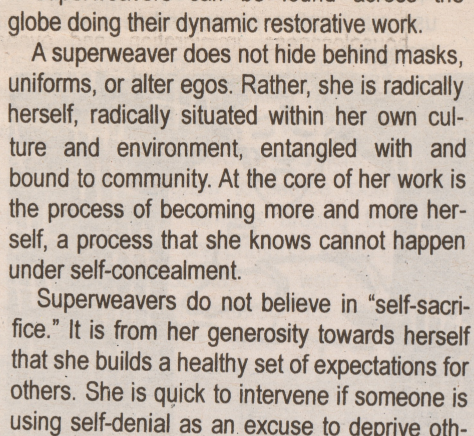
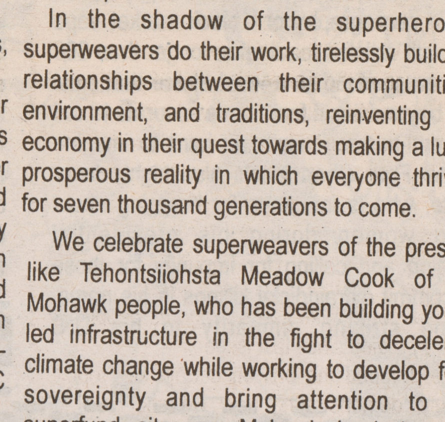
*The Indigenous Futures Collective is David Michael Karabelnikoff, Laina Greene, Lee Francis IV, and Samara Hayley Steele.*





The 2021 SLINGSHOT ORGANIZER IS NOW AVAILABLE!!

A day planner calendar with radical historical dates, worldwide radical contact list, menstrual calendar & more

Spiral bound 5.5 x 8.5 inches
$16 suggested retail

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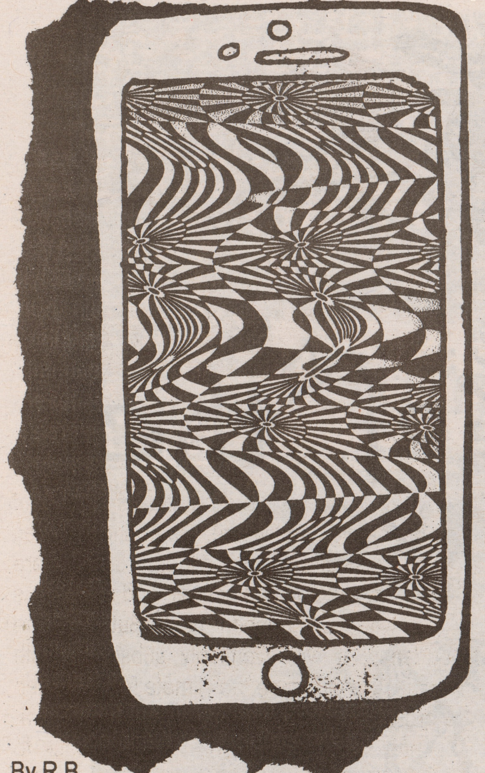
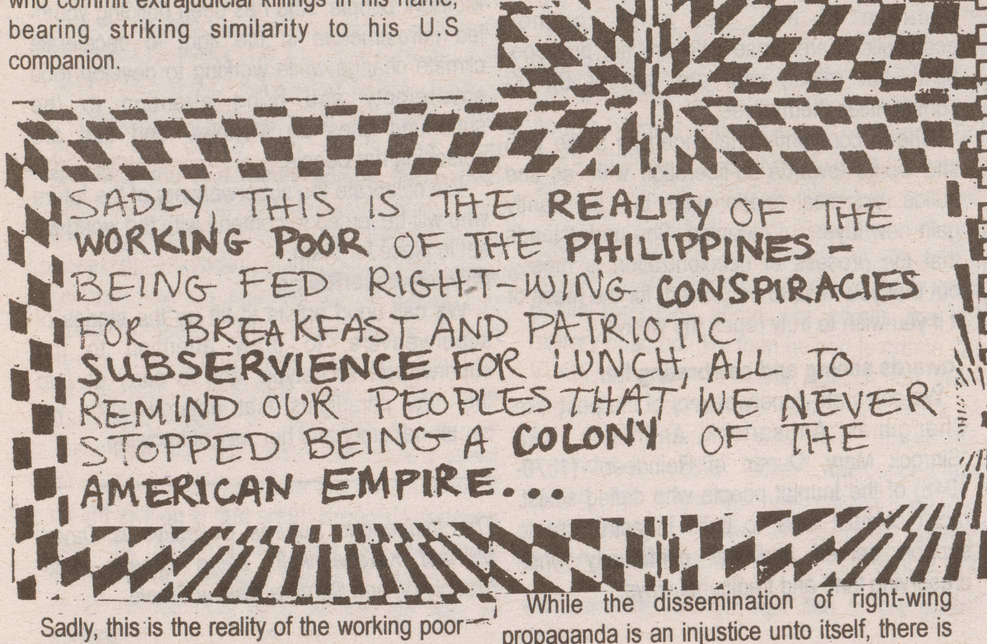


# FROM PORTLAND TO THE PHILIPPINES: DISINFORMATION FOR GLOBAL FASCISM

By R.B.

I open Facebook to a new post from my grandmother - it is an article with a link to a website that reeks of spyware, stating that Nancy Pelosi is diverting funds from Social Security to fund the impeachment trials. My grandmother lives in the rural stretches of the Philippines and I wonder to myself, who the fuck managed to send the message. My family in the Philippines by and large posts this type of fodder, and I subjugate myself to awkward, half English, half Tagalog spats about what I understand to be nationalism and lies, and they understand to be loyalty. Mahal. The posts range from Donald Trump putting "China in its place", to our beloved Pilipino president -Duterte "cleaning up the Philippines". sometimes it's more QAnon flavored content about Trump and Duterte fighting a war against international warlords who are invested in maintaining a lizard run, sex trafficking ring. Regardless, they are always bullshit, usually linking to sites with popup ads for CGI pornography or black market vape pods, with articles reading no longer than 300 words categorized in a word space that exist so far beyond lies it feels more accurate to call them anti-truths. It isn't too hard to imagine that the Four Chan incels also highly favor Duterte, who is infamous for bragging about raping women during his presidential campaign and calling for impunity for those who commit extrajudicial killings in his name, bearing striking similarity to his U.S companion.



> SADLY, THIS IS THE **REALITY** OF THE **WORKING POOR** OF THE **PHILIPPINES** - BEING FED RIGHT-WING **CONSPIRACIES** FOR BREAKFAST AND PATRIOTIC **SUBSERVIENCE** FOR LUNCH, ALL TO REMIND OUR PEOPLES THAT WE NEVER STOPPED BEING A **COLONY** OF THE **AMERICAN EMPIRE...**

Sadly, this is the reality of the working poor of the Philippines - being fed right-wing conspiracies for breakfast and patriotic subservience for lunch, all to remind our peoples that we never stopped being a colony of the American empire, and to keep us coddled in the comfort of having American fascists choose our President. Some people would say it is random and bizarre how American political disinformation hits the Philippines sometimes harder and earlier than it even reaches the mainland, but when you think of how the American military tests teargas and rubber bullets on Palestinians prior to employing them on Black Lives Matter protests, it is understandable that they do the same to Pilipinos with misinformation dissemination and surveillance technology.

In the Documentary *"A Thousand Cuts"* Maria Ressa the Editor in Chief of *Rappler*, the foremost publication invested in combating right wing media brainwashing in the Philippines, explains why the Philippines was chosen as the premier testing ground for media disinformation and surveillance. She explains that the only population that spends more time on cellular devices and social media than Americans is Pilipinos -- probably due to the nature of our diaspora, fueled by the trans-continental need for service labor, of which the Philippines is a top purveyor, and thus to remain connected to loved ones we are always plugged in. Ressa notes that both Trump and Dueterte's campaigns collaborated with entities such as Cambridge Analytica to run targeted campaign ads, and "independent" media personalities who effectively campaigned to misinformed, rural, and poor populations. They invested in spreading propaganda and dissuading people from believing the word of media outlets who discredited their campaigns and ran stories highlighting their hate and violence inciting message The usage of media misinformation and targeted surveillance technologies that utilize personal data to create algorithms that spread this misinformation more effectively was a linchpin of the successful elections of both Duterte and Donald Trump. With re-elections brewing and the spread of global fascism accelerating alongside the rise of wanna be politicians shaped in the image of these fear mongering models, we must dig deep to understand how these tools are being used to shape a political ethos that stretches far beyond single figureheads.

While the dissemination of right-wing propaganda is an injustice unto itself, there is another layer of imperial fascism that underlies the intention of its dissemination. Due to poverty and lack of access to information or technology, political lies have the power to spread like wildfire and keep entire generations of the Pilipinos, who had no access to their decolonial history, brainwashed. This is a powerful tool of mobilization that the right employs internationally, and the Philippines is no exception. The fascists governments from Ferdinand Marcus and Duterte monetarily and politically gained through the imperial exploitation of Pilipino labor and natural resources. They, the rich, the political figureheads, have everything to lose if the working class rises against the socioeconomic inequality, the environmental degradation, and the militaristic occupation that is entrenched in fascist, U.S backed regimes.

Yet, there is a class of people that fight against this misinformation, fascism, and continuance of imperial regimes in the Philippines. These people span from indigenous community members unveiling the genocidal attacks and brutal murders of tribal leaders, journalists who cover the contradictory claims of Duterte such as the regime's corroboration with American government, military, and corporations, and working class Pilipinos who are being murdered in the thousands in the name of the Duterte's "War on Drugs" that should be more aptly titled, the "War on the Poor". These whistleblowers have forged a powerful movement against the fascist regime, many of whom have garnered international attention from NGOS to international anti-imperialist, pro-Communist organizers, especially those invested in the liberation of indigenous, working class peoples of the world - all this attention has been harnessed into international pressure on Duterte.

This pressure has led the regime to violently retaliate against liberation protesters, journalist, and activists in the form of the unholy "Anti-Terror Bill" - a piece of legislation that labels activists who organize against the regime and journalists who publish writing that could be considered slanderous or "inciting", as criminals who can be imprisoned or killed with impunity. Language of the bill criminalizes "seriously destabilize(ing) or destroy(ing) the fundamental social, economic or political structures of the country." This is especially dangerous to those who are organizing for a Communist insurgency to take place in the Philippines and for indigenous, farmers, and working class Pilipinos to take arms against the current political system and reimagine a nation built on indigenous sovereignty and collective ownership of the land. One that refutes American and other Western nations' exploitation of the natural resources and land that the Philippines sits upon. At this time, the Anti-Terror Bill has stated that pro-indigenous, Black Lives Matter, and anti-imperialist sentiments all fall under "violence inciting" language, and are punishable by means of imprisonment and death.

Liberty and freedom of speech are waning in the islands, and fear is sinking deeper into the psyches of liberation activists, as what started as friend requests from junk accounts laden with their personal information and creepy hits on the internet from anonymous hackers, became bodies on their front door steps, and violent lynchings in village centers, reminding one that maybe we are better off misinformed than dead and dismembered.

It is frightening to think that if the American government uses the information dissemination and tracking systems that the Philippines uses -- we too must be cognizant of the potential insurgence of an American "Anti-Terror Bill". In a similar fashion to the killings of indigenous leaders in the Philippines, we have Black Lives Matter protesters being pushed into unmarked vans, and being held hostage by the Department of Homeland Security in cities across the country, from Portland to Brooklyn, New York. While America too has a rich history of imprisoning and executing insurgents, from Fred Hampton's CIA backed assassination and Assata Shakur's detainment, to the disappearance and arrests of the Indigenous leaders of the No Dakota Access Pipeline (No DAPL) protests. We can only imagine that this type of hunting of activists to uptick with the growth of private companies such as Facebook stating that they will sell our information to the highest bidder, all while proving their willinness to hand over our identifying information for political power grabs of fascists. Our information lives on Facebook, White Pages, and the depths of the dark web - we are identifiable, discoverable, and plugged in with our locations and appearances being updated in databases every time we let Yelp use our location or we update a selfie onto Instagram.

While this is terrifying, the answer to how we escape this technological circle jerk of surveillance, misinformation, and fascism doesn't lie in burning your phone and deleting your social media. It lies in organizing smarter: using Signal, not taking photos at protests, leaving your phone at home when you organize, and not being a fucking snitch. It lies in fighting disinformation with the spread of powerful, liberating information - writing to your friends and family that are posting political lies, and falling into the depths of the hate mongering crevices of the internet. It is reminding those that we live in community with, by place, identity, or any sense that could create belonging with you and another, that the lies on the internet are just that, and what supersedes the faux "community" of the online underworld, is a tangible collection of people that stand together and united against the evils that keep us mutually subjugated. So often we falsely mark the people who fall under the influence of disinformation, such as followers of QAnon or other false prophets, as simply, idiots - that we could never be them or be in community with them. And while this terror of misinformation has taken hold, we must look to the powerful tools of humanization and education so we can ultimately find our mutual liberation to fight against private ownership of information, against the surveillance state, against the misuse of media, and ultimately against the fascist propaganda machine.

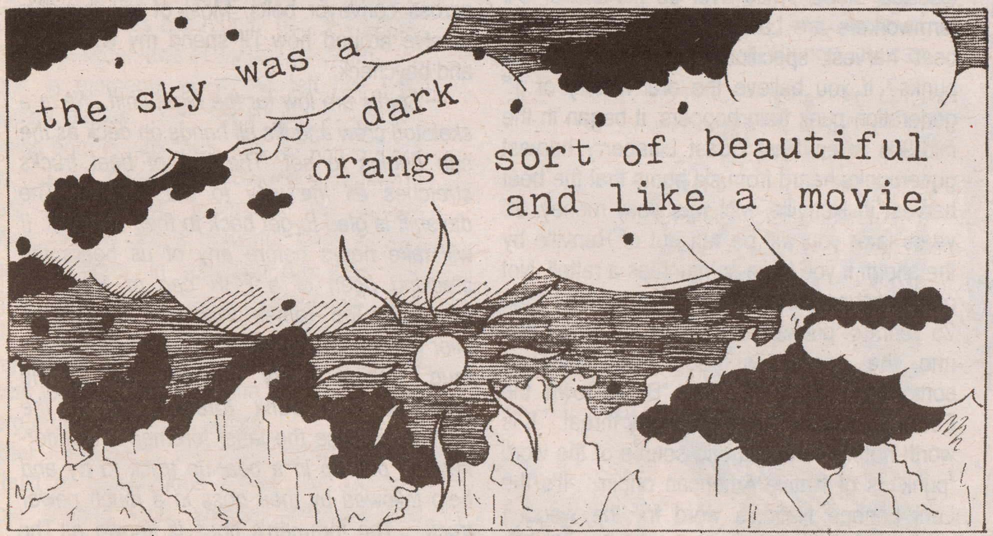
we don't want to get back to normal

# PANDEMIC AS PRACTICE RUN

## burning fossil fuels is suicide

By Jesse D. Palmer

I woke up late because it was still dark long after the sun should have come up. When I looked outside, the sky was a dark orange and streetlights were on like at twilight, even though it was the middle of the day — sort of beautiful and like a movie. I had no idea the sky could look like that. I knew it was wildfire smoke, but on a pre-conscious level I just felt fear and dread and doom. Anyone who saw it felt humbled and changed.


the sky was a dark orange
sort of beautiful and like a movie

Mega-fires and hurricanes. 120 degree heat waves and power cuts. Flooding and drought. People ask, "Is this the new normal?" The scary answer is probably not — we would be *lucky* if this is as bad as it gets. Climate chaos is likely to get *much worse* soon if we don't immediately stop burning all fossil fuels and cut other greenhouse gas emissions like methane. If we continue our present ways for even a few more years, just breathing air, eating food or seeing blue sky will be a luxury or impossible. Rather than 2020 being the hottest year in the last 100 years, we need to start thinking about it as the coolest year in the next 100 years.

Our species doesn't have to end up this way — destroying itself and taking most other complex life systems with it. None of what we're currently experiencing is a surprise — it is exactly what scientists have been warning would happen for 30 years. We have alternatives available, but taking them will require massive political and cultural will, right away.

It is an odd twist of timing that the pandemic offers so many lessons relevant to addressing climate change — if we understand and learn from them.

### Immediate action or suicidally timid gradualism?

The speed and breadth of the initial global pandemic lockdown in March proved that rapid, dramatic, global change is possible. At least for a short period, planes stopped flying, roads emptied of traffic, and the supposedly unstoppable industrial machines paused. We saw before our eyes that we've been told lies about climate our whole lives — the lie that only very gradual change is possible.

The powers-that-be have been setting absurdly mediocre goals — small reductions in fossil fuel dependence by 2050. They are protecting the oil industry, not our lives. Rapid, global, widespread change is possible and can happen if those in power and everyone else wants it to and does something. We can address climate *now* by abruptly ending combustion of fossil fuels — we don't have to wait. Just like every sector of society rapidly came up with creative and previously unconsidered alternatives in response to the pandemic, if we wanted to stop emissions we could find a way. There would be a period of disruption and adjustment as we've seen with the pandemic. The best historical example of such a rapid change is when most of the world mobilized for world war II — auto factories converted production to tanks and everyone's lives changed direction in a matter of months.

### Systemic change vs. personal change is a false debate

A lot of discussion about climate change is finger-pointing between the need for personal action vs. corporate and government action. As the pandemic has shown, it is a false debate — both are essential simultaneously for a rapid, dramatic, widespread shift. A lot of action to stop the virus, such as mask wearing, *has* to happen on an individual personal level. And yet social structures are also crucial — individuals cannot invent or deploy tests and vaccines.

A single individual wearing a mask obviously isn't enough, but if most people do it, then it can make a difference. When wearing a mask, no one will be perfect and wear it all the time, but the more you try, the better. For climate change, just because your personal emissions reductions cannot alone solve the problem, and just because you may not be able to reduce *all* your emissions all the time right now, it still makes a difference to do your best all the time right now, rather than waiting for others or social structures to change first.

Just like it is more important to wear a mask in a high risk environment like a store or a crowded subway car, individual climate adjustments should be targeted towards the biggest emissions reductions. Knowing and using data is crucial in making everyday decisions. In the US, transportation accounts for 28% of emissions — about 60% of that is private cars. That means the greatest emissions-reduction choice individuals have control over is driving less. You don't have to be perfect to make a difference — driving a smaller car, driving less miles, driving less often, not idling the engine while you're looking at your phone — all helps.

Electricity emits 27% — and that is both personal and social, since the decision to burn gas to make electricity vs. use a windmill is beyond individual control, but the decision to leave lights on, run a clothes drier vs. use a clothes line, and waste power is individual. Pressuring the 100 highest emitting companies to switch to zero emissions technology is necessary, but those companies are often filling consumer demands for emissions dependent stuff, so we have to change our behavior, too.

### Data is crucial

Everyone can take an inventory of emissions — personal and social — to figure out prioritites. The EPA's Inventory of US Greenhouse Gas Emissions breaks it down like this:

Transport 28% | Electricity 27 % | Industry 22% | Agricultural 10% | Commercial | residential 12%

So the highest priorities are transport (60% are private cars) and electricity. Electricity generation is beyond individual control, but economically and technologically it is already possible to cut emissions to zero by generating power with wind, solar, geothermal, tidal and wave energy, and existing carbon free sources like hydro-power and nuclear. All these sources have environmental problems on their own — there's no free lunch. But many are less harmful than emitting CO2. For instance wind power kills some birds, but engineers have reduced bird deaths by 70% by painting a blade black. More innovations like this are possible. With fossil fuels, their harms feel invisible because they are familiar.

The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) found that households accounted for 21.8% of total energy consumption in the US in 2014. In 2019 electricity accounted for 41% of household end-use energy consumption while natural gas accounted for 44%. While electricity can become carbon free, natural gas combustion will always emit CO2 as well as a lot of methane when it is fracked, drilled and transported. Methane is a much more potent greenhouse gas than CO2. So on an individual level, a high priority project is to get rid of all household appliances that burn gas, and replace them with electric. Or use a clothesline :)

Reducing emissions is like wearing a mask — you do it for other people, not just yourself. Maybe even mostly for others. It doesn't work unless everyone does it, but it cannot work unless you do it.

The buck-shifting debate between personal behavior and corporate / political action is just an excuse to avoid any change at all. Individuals don't like change because it is uncomfortable, and systems don't like change because it's expensive and more complex than continuing what has worked. But with the climate, burning fossil fuels is suicide. Change is inevitable one way or another. We can make change now, or nature will make the changes for us by wiping us out.

### Ignoring science won't work

Pretending a natural / physical / chemical / biological crisis isn't real won't make it go away — and will almost certainly make it worse. The US's magical thinking about the pandemic has cost hundreds of thousands of lives, whereas other countries that paid attention to science have had much lower death rates. If the US had treated Covid-19 seriously in March, we wouldn't still all be on lockdown. We could be like the rest of the world — our kids in school, living with some safety measures, and able to be with others in public.

Even from a mainstream, money-focused perspective, the economic cost of ignoring science is higher — for both pandemics and climate change. Idiots argued it was more profitable to open businesses back up quickly, but it is now obvious that the longer-term costs have been far worse.

With climate change, those who want to pretend it isn't real or is "too expensive" to address now are making the same mistake, except with much higher stakes and more tragic consequences. Human-caused climate change is real and every day we wait to address it now will cost lives later.

### So what now?

We must not let the dramatic disruptions of the pandemic go to waste. The pandemic has been stressful because all our routines are disrupted, we're facing danger, and none of us know what will happen next. But with the pandemic, it will eventually subside. With climate change, once the climate is too broken to grow enough food, there will be no light at the end of the tunnel and no going back to normal. So the pandemic is an emotional and social preview of what life looks like when everything goes to pieces. It's a red alert warning that there's not much more time before it is too late.

Immediately stopping emissions now gives us a tiny change of averting greater chaos and destruction, but the window may have already closed, and if not, it is rapidly closing.

A fundamental problem is psychology. Climate change is much less immediate and in your face than the pandemic. Regarding the US's failure to handle the pandemic compared to other countries, it has been scary how many people take pride in not wearing masks and how many subscribe to conspiracy theories or baseless miracle cures. This will all be a factor addressing climate — there will be plenty of people clinging to gas guzzlers and claiming windmills cause cancer — but we need to try anyway.

The pandemic started as a health crisis, but triggered an economic depression that is on the verge of unleashing mass evictions. Given all the disruption, there is a desperate need for progressive collective action with a positive, hopeful, inclusive and compassionate vision to heal not only bodies, but the economic and social landscape. Rather than bailing out polluting greedy businesses, now is the time to shut them down, retrain their workers and re-purpose their machines and buildings towards supplying the things people need without burning fossil fuels.

> GIVEN ALL THE DISRUPTION, THERE IS A DESPERATE NEED FOR PROGRESSIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION WITH A POSTIVE, HOPEFUL, INCLUSIVE AND COMPASSIONATE VISION TO HEAL NOT ONLY BODIES, BUT THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

The idea of a Green New Deal is not just building windmills, solar panels, and new green infrastructure — its about employing people who have lost their jobs and re-directing work away from unjust, unsustainable industry and towards a future worth living in.

We don't want to get back to normal.

The GDP has fallen dramatically during the pandemic and we don't want it back. Rather, let's all have more leisure time and redistribute the work that has to get done. We could all be working 20 hours a week if we got rid of bullshit jobs and stopped consuming stuff we don't need. The 40 hour week was won during the Great Depression 90 years ago — its been obsolete for years. At least during the initial phase of lockdown, you could hear the birds and take a moment to reflect. That seems like a vague memory now, but it's worth remembering that life doesn't have to be this hectic all the time.

I don't know how it is all going to work, and maybe it won't. But even if we are not successful, fighting for a world worth living in feels like the best way I can think to spend the time we may have left. Now is the time to do something, or better yet, stop doing something that is emitting CO2. We cannot keep living the way we are living.

# BURN DOWN THE FACTORY

## OR the cross-faded EMBERS in the WEST

By Young Carhartt

SHITFACE TIME

*Sugar Beet Harvesters Everywhere. The Time Has Come. Lock Out, Tag Out, Throw Away The Key. Burn Down The Factory. SOS. Call For Bodies. This Town Ain't Big Enough For The Two Of Us. Fuck The Borders From Wyoming To Minnesota. Against Refined Sugar And Its World.*

These are the words that came to mind, just for a moment, when it felt like there was nothing left to lose during the October 2019 sugar beet harvest. During our negotiation with the bosses for more money, safer work conditions and better housing, a Northern Plains autonomous zone flashed through my mind. Trash barricades and tire fires across the sugar beets piling yard, a message to the industrial barons and landlords that their time was up.

But that choice came down between making a statement or making a few thousand dollars. And I was broke. The sugar industrialists knew they could go broke too. Confused by the anger and demands of our large crowd of dirty 20-somethings living out of cars, the Express Employment representative simply said "I mean, you guys chose this lifestyle."

Take off your mask, pretend to take some deep gulps of the fresh prairie's air and join me for a moment by the fair confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. This is not a call to action, just a chance to stretch sore limbs and reflect. On the very stretch of river where Sitting Bull was forced to hand over his Winchester rifle to the US military, you will find the sugar factory and this lifestyle.

The atmosphere of the beet harvest could be gauged somewhere between an Earth First! rendezvous and Juggalo gathering. But instead of sabotaging industrial machinery or getting fucked up, you get paid to operate industrial machinery and get fucked up. For a month of work, you can drive away with an average of $4,000. That's a huge check if the only other job you can get is as an underwater ceramic technician (dishwasher).

My first season in 2018 was a good gamble. Some more notable memories include punks mobbing the only hotel hot tub in town with bottles of champagne, forming a choreographed dance crew on the clock rather than work, and a lot of downtime in the break room for absurd conversations fueled by burnt coffee and kratom. October 2019 was a different hand of cards; overtime hours were cut, beet pilers were broken and stuck in mud every night and a record number of beets went rotting in the fields. From the farmers who had to pay over $300 an acre for their rotten beets to the workers shoveling a biblical amount of mud out of the pilers, it was a miserable experience.

The large expanse of prairie between the Mississippi River and Rocky Mountains happens to be a great place to raise sugar beets, as some white settlers came to find out. The sugar factory, beets fields and piling yard are located in a place commonly called "the middle of nowhere" but is actually the homeland of the Assiniboine people. It's much closer to the 49th Parallel than the closest big cities of Denver and Minneapolis, which are both a 10 hour drive away. It's a place where you can see the pulsing colors of Northern Lights, if the open flames of oil wells don't block it out. On a quiet night camping next to the river, you are just as likely to hear coyotes as you are drunken semiautomatic gunfire.

Out on the dirt roads, the only visible connections you can trace back to the U.S. are the oil pipelines. They cut through this part of the planet like a rich kid's really expensive and really hazardous tinker toy. It is safe to assume that some men very far away from here are making more money than you or I will ever have in our lives, while the water and the communities of people who use it are left with the side effects. The drilling, movement and consumption of oil is of the highest priority. Everything and everyone else is in the way. Water is not sacred, it's an afterthought. It is slimy on your hands as it comes out the faucet, and it is an unspoken rule to never drink it. It's like falling into a Beehive Design Collective poster at your infoshop or drug dealer's wall.

Amidst a mural of factories, railroads, monocropping, gas stations, Trump flags, empty boomtowns, neon casinos, fast food, McMansions and trailer park man camps, there's a natural world holding it all. You fall through the river valleys where herds of bison, sagebrush, wild horses, prairie dogs, wildflowers, dinosaur bones, tallgrass, prickly pear cacti, cottonwoods, deer and antelope play. It is outstandingly beautiful in a region that is an outpost of American colonialism, and its only role to the rest of the country is based on the extraction of resources. But you land into this mural on a curious detail. It's an abandoned train bridge and tunnel covered in graffiti. It's crawling with the laziest, brilliantly creative and soon to be drunk people in the US workforce for the month of October. They're burning pallets, playing instruments and eating birthday cake: punks.

Somewhere between
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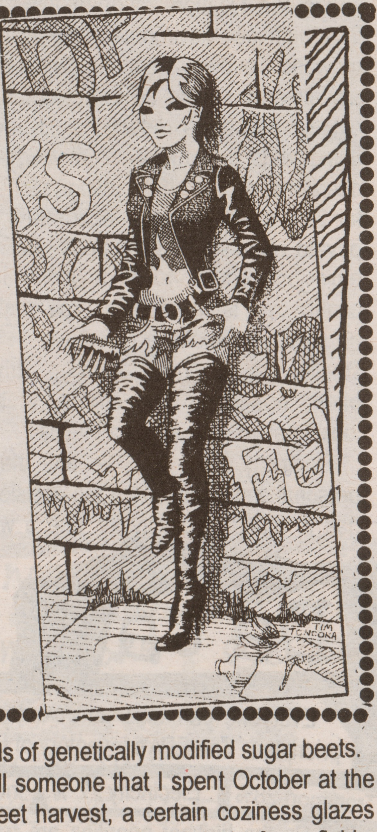

Coming to the Northern Plains from all directions is this ragtag night crew. Down the highways in busted vehicles with dashboards full of animal bones, dead flowers, faded cassette tapes and parking tickets. Like pages ripped from Steinbeck and thrown into the winds of I-94. It's a rugged individualism balanced with a queer collectivism. Underneath everyone's attitudes, dirt & glitter is a mutual understanding that for the length of the harvest, everything, good or bad, would be shared.

American agriculture heavily relies on a large transient workforce of migrants to harvest its food, and this includes the more classical hobo. While over 80 percent of US farmworkers are Latinx, why does the sugar beet harvest specifically attract crowds of punks? If you believe the oral history of 1st generation punk train hoppers, it began in the mid-90s when East Coast blueberry harvest gutterpunks heard from ski bums that the beet harvest in Renville, MN was easy money. 25 years later you will be run out of Renville by the sheriff if you have so much as a rattail. Not only because the town was host to more than 25 years of punks being out of the gutter and into the operator's booth, but because somewhere along the line "Burn Down the Factory" stopped being an empty threat. It is worth noting here that one source of the word "punk" is of Native American origin. It's the Leni Lenape Nation's word for the wooden dust, ashes and embers useful for starting fires.

The author William Least Heat-Moon defines the Western myth cycle shortly; "A stranger enters town. A stranger leaves town." Walking down main street I could tell from people's expressions. I was the stranger. While standing by the cannons of the abandoned military outpost Ft. Buford, it felt obvious that there was a connection between Sitting Bull's surrender and me getting paid. And one between the buffalo's extermination and fields of genetically modified sugar beets.

If I tell someone that I spent October at the sugar beet harvest, a certain coziness glazes their face. They think of lush farm fields, smiling faces and sunshine. It looks more like any dystopic-apocalyptic sci-fi film. Darkness and clouds of dust surround heavy machinery on a moonscape of Monsanto dirt, pumping living things into piles. Open flames shooting out of oil wells compete with the floodlights to cast surveilling light on every movement, from coworkers sneaking sips from a Real Tree flask, down to the fox crossing the piling yard in a panic. The constant grinding gears weighed against the constant silence coming in through the night and across the empty fields. The eco-feminist and nihilist voices in my head stage their debates from 6PM to 6AM. 12 hour shifts are a long time to shiver and stare off into truckloads of beets shooting across conveyor belts. Most of my thoughts revolve around how I'll spend my wintertime and paycheck.

*~~Spirits are low for the night shift. We're a skeleton crew and it's all hands on deck as the sun begins to set. The line of beet trucks stretches all the way to the horizon. The dayshift is glad to get back to their RV park. It will take hours before any of us hears the cracking open of a PBR can or feels the warmth of Top Ramen. Within 10 minutes the piler I'm working becomes clogged with heavy mud, caking every moving part of the machine. The punk foremen (& in the nightshift's case the label foremen is gender-neutral) pull up in a beat-up truck to try and help followed by their boss in a much newer truck. The foremen's boss is known as* The Agriculturist, *the ultimate decision maker and liaison between the factory and piling yard. She is unimpressed by the night crew's audacity to ask for more money and has in the past cut our overtime hours as punishment. She throws a shovel in my direction.*

*I begin digging mud out when there's a disturbance from the other end of the piling yard. An RV tears across the dirt weaving through empiric lines of beet trucks and kicks up clouds of dust blowing in my direction. The RV screeches to a stop and the passenger door bursts open spilling empty Bud Lite Lime cans across the ground. A scrawny figure in a bright orange safety vest & black ski mask bursts from the RV and sprints towards me and* The Agriculturist. *He screams like a bat out of hell, "BURN DOWN THE FACTORY!! FUCK YOU!!" hands me a fresh box of Domino's Pizza and gives the boss middle fingers. The RV's pilot and comrade in a ski-mask peel away to deliver scammed pizzas to the rest of the night crew, understaffed & hungry on the pilers. I take a slice and pass the rest off to the foremen, all of us covered in mud but laughing for the first time in what seems like ages. ~~*

Although the settlers in this part of the US would welcome Trump graciously, it's hard to imagine that the president, or anyone else wearing a suit for that matter, could ever be bothered to pay a visit. You'd have to see a burning factory and the suspension of law and order first. Since the arrival of Lewis and Clark in 1805, the west has been militarized, bought and sold all to the benefit of rich white men.

In 2020 AD, when every day seems worse than the last, and the only news is bad news, it becomes crippling to feel that there could be something worse than "No Future". I try to imagine a future that isn't techno-fascist environmental catastrophe with cops to enforce any inequality. I look for lessons from Sitting Bull, his knowledge that a different world is always possible and is physically right under our feet. I try to imagine a belonging that doesn't require Usernames or Passwords, a belonging without Terms or Conditions. A belonging that aims for living with the seasons instead of against them. I think of pallet fires in train tunnels and its spontaneous choir of singing voices that can create a night's shelter. Sharing birthday cake in the darkness and making wishes before the fire goes out.

# LIFE WISH / DEATH WISH

Continued from Page 1

perceiving and understanding the world. I have been fortunate enough to have had this guidance in my own life, and to me it seems like the only way that we will break out of the divisiveness of us-and-them thinking that perpetuates oppression and the repetition of the cycles of abuse that have defined history (or at least Western history) for millennia. And I believe that this is the fundamental message (or at least one of the messages) that underpinned Standing Rock, and recent indigenous uprisings.

But there is a taboo against discussing spirituality in anarchist circles, with certain exceptions granted. But I believe that unless we internalize that message, we as a movement will keep spinning our wheels. Really, I believe the many crises — ecological, economic, and political — stem from an underlying spiritual crisis, the result of generations of oppression and alienation. For so long, religion has been used as a tool of social control, and the result has been the suppression of true, authentic spirituality. The very people and institutions that were supposed to offer spiritual guidance, to help human beings orient themselves spiritually, served to turn them against themselves. And so as we became more able to think for ourselves, we turned from religion, recognizing it for what it is, tools for oppression.

There is a great spiritual hunger in our times. I believe that as economic, political, social, and cultural conditions deteriorate, this will become an increasingly defining feature of the zeitgeist, and I have no doubt that movements will arise which speak to that hunger. Some of these movements will be revolutionary, some will be reactionary. Some will seek solace in memories or romanticized notions of the past, some will speak to the urgent need to radically transform our relationship to nature, to one another, to the cities and territories we inhabit. Those of us who have long wished for a radical transformation of society may well live to have our wishes granted, though there is no guarantee whatsoever that it will be what we hoped for, or even an improvement to the current social order. But I feel certain that a great change is coming, that many more will come to feel that we have come to the end of the road for the materialist paradigm currently defining Western civilization.

We must learn to revere the Sacred again. We must learn to highly value that which is worthy of profound respect. We must learn our place within the great web of life within which we live, which we are a part of, and value ourselves and one another as belonging to it, as being worthy recipients of the gift of life. We must learn to be humble, to be willing to listen and to learn from the perspectives of others, even those of people we are opposed to, to work towards understanding why others feel the way they do. I see too much self-righteousness in activist circles these days. Activists are often judgmental, fault-finding, and narrow-minded. We keep doing the same things that we've been doing without honestly asking ourselves if it is working.

I have been highly involved in the anarchist movement for a decade and I have seen countless people driven out of radical scenes, and at least in the area where I live, it doesn't seem to me that new people are coming in at the rate they are being driven out. And all of this in a movement that purports to create more inclusive society, where people are freer to be themselves, where police and prisons would be unnecessary because everyone would have access to the support that they need. To believe that this is possible is to place tremendous faith in the power of love, kindness, and acceptance to change human behavior, and if we are to convince the people that such faith is a viable political approach, we must demonstrate its effectiveness by practicing it ourselves.

# TIME TO REMOVE THE LOGIC OF CAPITALISM

## FROM THE ENERGY SECTOR

By Teresa Smith

In September, entire towns in Western Oregon and Washington burned to the ground in hours, while giant fires swallowed vast swaths of land.

As I write this, forests that I used to walk through as a child are still burning — forests of ferns and mossy evergreens that used to sparkle with dew, forests that are now completely dried out.

Thanks to climate change, the climate of the West Coast no longer matches the ecology. We don't get enough rain in Oregon and Washington to support rainforests anymore, so now they are leaving via fire. Many parts of California are likewise now too hot and arid for their pre-climate-change ecologies, and each year the fires in Cali get bigger and more intense.

These massive fires are going to continue, likely for the next decade or two, until the relics of the old ecosystems completely burn off. This is what climate change looks like. We don't get to go back to the way things were.

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Last summer, I had a chance to meet with a few climate scientists and look at climate data and climate models with them.

The thing about this experience that shocked me the most is that I learned that many climate scientists have not been entirely forthright about the data: they have been showing us models that make things *look better than they actually are*. These climate sciences have been caving in to the pressures of toxic positivity, and so some of them are pretending the crisis isn't as bad as it is. As one scientist I spoke to explained, "We don't want to scare or depress people, so we just show them the less intense models." But the less intense models don't factor in the acceleration of burning carbon that is actually happening, so they have lured us into a false sense of security, of thinking we have more time than we do. But if you look at the models that match the acceleration of carbon emissions that is actually occurring (for example, the CanESM5 model under SSP585), you see exactly why we have massive fires spanning from the lip of the Pacific to the Rockies right now. Carbon emissions are accelerating rather than going down. Things are worse sooner than most of the projections they were showing us.

It may be too late for the West Coast's ecology, but we need to fight like hell if we're going to save other parts of the ecosphere. Otherwise, our entire planet is going to end up a lifeless husk.

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A number of my friends in carbon-free off-the-grid communities in rural Oregon have been displaced from their homes due to the fires, and the entire West Coast has been choking for weeks under the thick smoke — smoke that is filled with deadly PM2.5 particles.

Perhaps the biggest take-way from all of this is that we can't simply "drop out" and go create carbon-free communes in the woods. No matter how "carbon-free" our individual lifestyles or communities become, climate change will follow us, wherever we go.

We are having to wake up to the reality of just how interconnected we all are. Many humans are on course to burn down the planet. There is nowhere to hide from their behaviors. If we are going to end climate change, it will have to be a collective process.

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It is easy to blame consumers, but the reality is: it is the carbon dealers who need to be shut down — through divestment, public policy, and diversity of tactics.

The carbon dealers have been tricking us into blaming other consumers for climate change for decades. In the late 1990s, BP Oil created the "carbon footprint" campaign as a way to direct attention towards consumers and away from the oil companies. Meanwhile, oil companies and private utilities have been actively working to kill carbon-free and lower-carbon alternatives. Those corporations have been fighting to force an economy upon us in which carbon is increasingly put into the air.

Why are the corporations doing this? Because they are legally beholden to their investors to create more money next quarter than this quarter.

The legal impetus for growth is perhaps the most fucked up thing about any corporation: investors can sue CEOs who fail to turn a profit — meaning in the case of oil companies, our whole legal system is compelling them to put more carbon in the air next year than this year. The same goes for private utilities.

If there is one thing that has become increasingly clear: When the energy sector is governed via capitalism, we are committing collective suicide.

Why aren't there solar panels on every roof? Why haven't electric cars replaced gas-powered ones? Why isn't there a light rail system in Los Angeles and in many other key cities?

- Because private utilities have spent the last 40 years dismantling pro-solar policy.
- Because big oil companies fought to sequester patents and crush all lower-carbon alternatives.
- Because automotive companies literally pulled up the light rail tracks in LA and other places because they wanted to enforce dependence upon cars.

It is time to face the fire. The transition to a carbon-free society can't happen while the logic of capital controls the energy sector. And the transportation sector probably needs to be de-capitalized as well.

Now more than ever, we should be putting every ounce of strength we have into completely ending practices that put carbon into the air.

It is time to end the production of cars with combustion engines.

We need to de-carbonize the system of transporting things, or better yet: switch to hyper-local production of food and goods.

It is time to de-carbonize the electric grid.

The practice of burning coal for power must go.

We need to remove the logic of capital from oil, from the electric grid, from the entire energy sector, and from most forms of transportation as well. Time is up.

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If humans survive these times, we'll probably spend the next few millennia writing tragic poems about how we gave our power over to these deranged institutions called "corporations" that ran rampant and destroyed our air, water, and ecology and caused untold levels of harm for nothing. Nothing the capitalists promise each other will be worth anything on a dead planet, and if capitalists continue controlling the energy sector, that is the only possible outcome.

As we grieve the ecosystems that are now leaving us, we must awaken to the fast work that needs to be done if we such to keep our planet habitable.

Community members putting some finishing touches on a new tiny house for a resident of the 37MLK camp in Oakland, CA. August 30, 2020 by ANKA.

CONTRA FIFE CO. APPROACHES THE MGMT. OFFICE TO PROTEST FEES. ATLANTA, GA.

# narratives of housing justice

## IN THE TIME OF A PANDEMIC

*rac hug*

As the American capitalist system began to crumble around us in mid-March, the working class was hit with mass layoffs as businesses both large and small (especially those deemed "non-essential") were forced to close or greatly reduce operations.

This left a huge group of people between a cough and a hard place— when it comes down to it, paying through your teeth to have access to something that should be your human right (especially during a pandemic) doesn't make much sense. That's why communities and housing advocacy organizations have mobilized on an awesome scale to push for **rent suspensions, rent forgiveness,** and for foix without houses— **access to safe shelter/ housing, food, water, and healthcare needs.**

In this article, we check in with some organizers and tenants from around the country to see what they're up to, and what resources and tips they can share with those of us who wish to plug in.

Here in the Bay Area, renting has been hell for a long time. Similar to what's happening in any other urban or suburban city across the "nation," rapid gentrification and development has made it impossible to earn a living wage, or be able to afford skyrocketing rents and landlords under increasing pressure to be exploitative. This has led to a mass exodus of working/lower-middle class people, punks, weirdos etc. to places slightly cheaper like Portland, OR; Oroville, CA; Boise, ID; Philly, PA; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI...inevitably roiling the unstoppable force of gentrification elsewhere....

In New York City, comrade Phantom Menace recently lost their housing. As shelter-in-place orders took effect, they watched as a lot of people lost their ability to make rent. There are tenants unions such as ***Housing Justice for All*** (among many others) organizing rent strikes all across the city. Phantom Menace knows of people that have been on rent strike for over six months!

There is also organization around eviction defense. Even though there has been a federal eviction moratorium issued by the CDC in effect until the end of December 2020, there have been many landlords illegally evicting tenants--so much so that some NYC politicians have expressed fear of an 'explosion' of homelessness. Housing Justice for All expects to be on the ground in three large waves of evictions predicted to occur into 2021 unless further legislation occurs. Organizations like ***Brooklyn Eviction Defense*** are on call at **(917) 982-2265** and show up at houses, locking arms and using diverse tactics to prevent illegal evictions.

I spoke with my friend Rizzy about their experience with tenants organizations. They currently organize with the ***Housing Rights Committee of SF*** *(HRC)*, ***SMC Tenants Council***, and have been working with the ***Veritas Tenants Association*** in SF in their struggle against San Francisco's second largest developer.

**Rizzy:** "My current landlord is a huge gentrifier named NEIL SULLIVAN...he lives in Malibu and really doesn't see the harm he's causing."

The Sullivan Management Company (SMC East Bay) made their money in Oakland buying up a bunch of houses during 2008's economic collapse, evicting established tenants, and moving in new tenants at market-rate. SMC has evicted about 350 households in the last five years, and currently owns over 200 properties in (primarily West) Oakland and the greater East Bay.

SMC has made pitiful attempts at mitigating the damage they've done to communities in West Oakland, which is only made worse by how they've been dealing with their tenants.

"We have a council (*SMC Tenants Council*), but the landlord refuses to acknowledge us. They want to break things down. Work with people on an individual basis, y'know...divide and conquer. They're even making different deals with different people in regards to tenants' inability to pay rent, doing anything they can to lock people into repayment procedures."

Learning about tenant rights can be a privilege to those who have lived in areas with lots of protections for tenants and opportunities for them to organize. This is why it is even more important to share knowledge with your friends and neighbors to show them what power they really have!

Ryan King is a long-time Bay Area resident who recently moved to Chicago. A few months ago, he and his neighbors were bullied out of their building by the landlord.

**Ryan:** "We had to look into [tenants rights organizations] because they were trying to evict our whole building. It was so shady!"

The owner and property manager would come to the building and verbally harass tenants *without any kind of mask or PPE on*, completely disregarding tenants' safety. The landlord harassed them further by starting to loudly demolish half the building on every day except Sundays--without any of the proper permits. Ryan got in contact with the ***Illinois Tenants Union*** and was directed to call a lawyer, who in turn helped them negotiate a lease buyout from the landlord.

**R:** "Our neighbors and coworkers thought we were insane when we talked about our fight with our landlords, and the fact that we won money from them to be able to move. I don't think folks here realize you can do stuff like that! We are totally spoiled out here in the Bay and on the west coast."

The spark of organizing ignites in people in different ways and at different times. It is immensely important to remember-- and this is true in aiding more issues than just tenants' rights-- TALK TO YOUR NEIGHBORS!!!

**Rizzy:** "I've been relatively aware of tenants unions, but in terms of when I realized I could get involved against my corporate landlord...someone doorknocked me and talked about how awful Sullivan is and how to organize as tenants. We found out where all my landlords' properties are...we do research on them. With these big scary landlords, we know that rent forgiveness will not harm them at all."

The Sullivan Management Company East Bay Tenants Council have been having very successful actions. Recently they even had a phone zap with so many callers that all phone lines overloaded and shut down, completely disrupting SMC's operations. **Stay updated and in touch with them on f*cebook @SmcTenantsCouncilOakland and on instagram/twitter @smc_tenants**

Now, it's all fine and well if you're paying rent (or not), but there are currently unprecedented numbers of people living outside on the streets and without shelter.

COVID has not only contributed to a massive increase in people experiencing homelessness, but the possibility of contracting a deadly virus is only the cherry on top of a lack of access to any suitable/affordable form of healthcare, food, water, PPE, trash services, electricity, shelter....

During these dangerous times— especially as government welfare systems crumble and natural disasters become more frequent due to climate crisis, some unhoused communities and their allies have rallied against their state and local governments to be able to provide people with shelter in hotels. Sadly, these living situations are often unsafe, temporary, and rely upon one testing positive to be able to receive shelter. To circumvent this situation, some unhoused communities have been autonomously creating their own housing. Working alongside builders and allies within local communities, some groups like ***37MLK*** and ***The Village in Oakland*** have been able to construct tiny homes for residents.

Marc has worked with *The Village in Oakland*--a collective of individuals which works "in service and support with 30 curbside communities, in partnership with 6, and promotes mutual-aid and unity building between curbside communities" since their genesis in 2017. The introduction of COVID shifted things dramatically within camps and the organization.

**M:** "On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we were able to build a bunch of tiny homes, but lots of residents had been promised shelters and sadly not all of them were finished. What was really great is that at the start of the pandemic in mid-March, there was a reenergizing push from the community to build for those people who weren't housed yet."

Marc contributes this "push" to the fact that a lot of folks weren't working at the beginning of the pandemic, and had the ability to volunteer more. It has also been easier to get people to come out on weekdays for the same reason, but with newfound energy came complications with safety around viral transmission. He expressed that there will always be risk involved while building in crews during COVID, but the bottom line is that people need secure shelter as soon as possible. They have been taking steps to mitigate the risk of viral transmisison inside the camp.

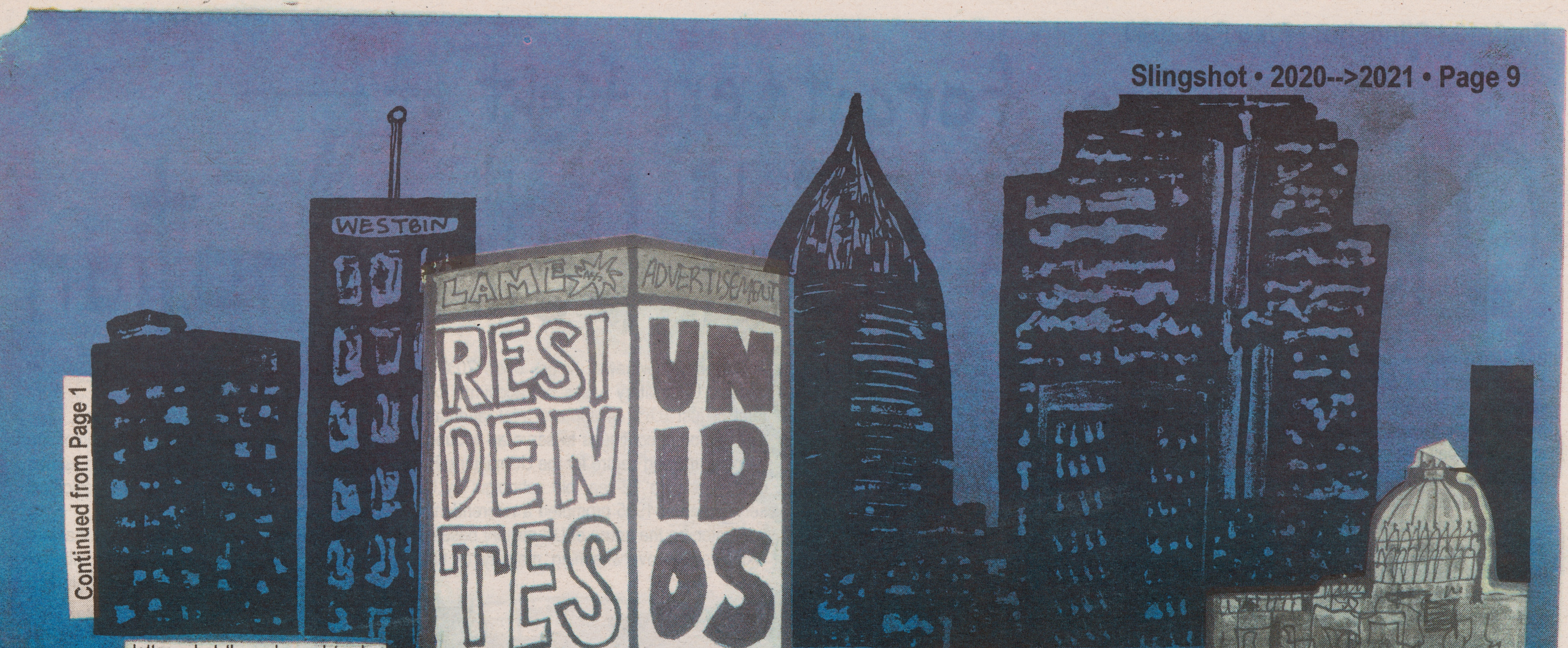
*The Village* always needs community support--both to build housing, and to simply get people housed (they've done a lot of successful work getting folks into hotels through crowdsourcing). They're trying to get more volunteer orientations going, so plug in by reaching out and saying you wanna get involved. **Keep updated @villageoakland on Instagram.**

Hopefully these tales can inspire you to take action in your apartment complex, neighborhood, local encampment, or community as a whole. Reach out to groups doing these types of work in your area, or talk to your community and organize yourself!

PRIORITY

To start researching COVID-19-related housing protection legislation and keep track of housing justice actions in your area (or anywhere around the world!), visit the ANTIEVICTION MAPPING PROJECT's website, https://covid19.antievictionmap.com/#close

PRIORITY



Continued from Page 1

letter, what they planned to do about it, and issues or repairs needed in their unit. We started with our building, and gained a few helpers along the way. It took us almost into the evening to even get through a third of the doors, as the complex consists of buildings A through K and each building has anywhere from twenty-four to forty-eight units. Not to mention, people had a lot to share with us. Neighbors were so happy to hear that someone cared enough to ask, even letting us in to show us the disrepair their unit was in. Folks here were paying $1100+ a month for these units and most of them are riddled with mold, have no A/C, no heat, no running water, broken water heaters, broken appliances, exposed beams, clogged water pipes, torn flooring, flooded areas, leaks, windows that don't open or no window at all, and/or worse issues. Some folks have been living here for 5, 10, even 15+ years, some because they didn't have the documentation to sign a lease anywhere else. And because of gentrification, rent steadily increased from $650-1100 in just under 5 years!

After canvassing, we decided to call it a day and met up at my place to put together everything we just witnessed over some dinner. We looked into who owned the property and what other properties they owned. The company is called FifeCo Properties and Fife is the owner's last name. Yami and I decided that night to call ourselves ContraFifeCo, set up an email account and start a hashtag with it for social media purposes. We organized all of the data we compiled that day and transferred it into a Sandstorm account under a trusted server. We continued to reach out to others for guidance, and brought more friends along with us who had experience around tenant organizing and unions. Some were from IWW, and others from a group called Housing Justice League.

As exhausted as we were, the next morning we continued to canvass, posting flyers on all the doors about this evening's first tenant meeting in the center of the apartment complex. In the afternoon, a march we planned went through the streets of the entire complex with drums, noisemakers, and megaphones in hand to show solidarity and promote the meeting. Announcing in Spanish to the onlooking neighbors on their porches, two neighbors in the march shouted "Don't be afraid, come out and defend yourselves!", "Fight back!", "Unidos en la lucha!". For some of the neighbors, it looked as though they were shocked to see us marching down the streets. After all of the work and support, it still seemed as though we had very few people from the apartments physically on board. However, at the park for the meeting, there were probably about 20 people at 6pm, and then it seemed that every five minutes, another twenty people had trickled in. By about 6:30pm we counted more than 120 people there!

It was at this first meeting that we decided to start an official tenants' union and call ourselves Residentes Unidos (*Residents United*). Those who went door to door explained how exhausting it was, so instead we collectively decided that there would be 2-4 ambassadors for each building, and those delegates would ensure that info about the next gathering would get out to everyone in their building. Furthermore, we agreed to a list of demands, for the fines to be expunged, and the repairs to be made swiftly. It was also at this meeting where we devised an action for the next day, or Monday morning, when the office would re-open. Folks wanted to involve the media, so a press release was made. We rested better that night, feeling inspired and empowered.

About 30 of us in the neighborhood were able to meet up as planned, and with us were several crews of reporters. We bore rent checks in hand, marched into the leasing office, and made note on camera that the landlord was refusing to take our rent. This gave us the legal upper hand to fight against the eviction while not actually paying rent. In Georgia, if a tenant withholds rent, that is grounds for immediate eviction. The property management at the leasing office was particularly hostile this morning, shouting at us to get out and mocking us. One of the leasing agents said that they would call the cops and another said that they would contact their lawyer if we didn't stop filming them. And then the cops arrived.

We were 30 deep and most had children, and/or were undocumented. In a quick response of compassion, we made sure everyone knew that it was perfectly alright if anyone had to step back, go home, and that there would be no judgment. Everyone nodded in agreement as we could hear the cop car doors slam just around the bend. And as they inched closer, to our surprise, nobody flinched. All of the residents stood grounded, feet planted, and chins high. We linked together arm and arm, and smiled at each other. It was an honor to be here experiencing this moment where solidarity was with us and it didn't really even matter to us what happened next. And then silence broke. Folks arm in arm started shouting at the cops that what is happening here is injustice, some explaining the outrageous fines, and another stating that property management had blamed the issuance of the fine on the city. Neighbors asked why the city had fined the apartment complex for having children's toys, non-metal patio furniture, and bicycles on the porches. And then a cop actually responded that the city doesn't have the authority to fine residents on private property for their porch items. Residentes Unidos were lit with validation and rage!

The cops then entered the leasing office, where property management was to explain their side of the story. Two minutes had not even passed before the manager opened the door and said, with a shaky voice and wide eyes, that the fines would be dropped. Someone shouted back, "What about the late fees for this month's rent?" The manager replied that there would be no late fees, which by the way was $100 for each day that it was late. Folks started cheering about the dropped fines and feeling alleviated about not facing an eviction after all!

We converged at the park to celebrate our first victory!

As the weeks passed, we continued to gather, chat on the thread, and gain comrades. We helped one another set up email accounts to give the apartment complex horrible reviews online and post the pictures of all of the many issues, one of which was a photo of the condemned sign that states no one is to be residing in this building.

Residentes Unidos were emboldened now to demand that repairs be met promptly. Tenants' rights organizers spoke about steps that the residents could take to ensure that the repairs are made, and that the property management be held accountable. By giving the leasing office notice that the repairs will be met within a "reasonable time", which can be just twenty-four hours, the residents were able to file complaints to the local city code enforcement agency when they did not meet this reasonable time. The city would then fine the landlord for each day that the repair was late which could be upwards of $200 a day. That evening we convened at Yami's place to create forms for this 'notice of due diligent repairs' (which were in Spanish, and did not have to be legally translated in English for the landlord). This was purposefully done as a jab, just as how the lease agreement was only provided in English.

UNIDOS
EN LA
LUCHA

These complaints had to be supported by physical evidence, like photos and/or videos of the damages. It was also awfully specific about what constitutes a repair that can be supported by the city vs a repair that required assistance by the county or state. For instance, if one had cockroaches, they had to contact the health and safety department. If one had a sewage problem, this complaint had to be directed at the county. Furthermore, the tenant had to be available for a walk-through home visit. More often, there was very little prior notice given for the visit, and if there was any notice, no specific time slot would be given; folks were literally expected to just be available or start all over with this process. Not only that, but when they did show up, they looked like the fucking feds, they were literally dressed as and had the demeanor of police, I mean, they are called Code Enforcement after all.

This was terrifying to many tenants. It was such an arduous process that rarely was followed through to the final step of reaching the landlords to actually make the repairs. Although, the few times this did actually occur, it was pretty satisfying seeing them scramble to make the repairs. And it kept them on their toes and busy enough for us to keep hitting them where it hurt and devise the next steps. The point was to never allow the landlords a moment of time to think rationally whatsoever, we want them making mistakes and fumbling at all times.

We met about 2-3 times a week from this point on and together we made everything happen. Folks posed questions on the thread and in the meetings when they needed help, and everyone was gladly willing to offer guidance. There was such a beautiful culture of solidarity in what became a compassionate community. When property management put up security cameras around the dumpsters to police the amount of trash each person threw out, the lines were mysteriously cut...twice. And when one of the most enthusiastic and outspoken people in the tenants' union faced an eviction in retaliation, folks came to court to support when they contested the eviction. In this case, they won by proving that the timeline of exerting their rights with the tenants' union against Fifeco's violations was the catalyst for this retaliatory eviction. They settled for a good sum of cash, free rent until their lease ended, and then they happily moved.

The tenants' union still exists and is even stronger now than it was last year. They've joined forces with the tenants of the other Fifeco properties and have helped them in making similar demands.

As soon as you move into an apartment complex, if there isn't a tenants' union, start one. Most likely, you or your neighbor will need one. And we would have had a quicker response and a greater advantage if all of the organizing aspects were already formed and not forming in the time of crisis, which was extremely stressful and left most of us without sleep. We got lucky in many ways that folks had been fired up individually for a long time and that so many of us were collectively affected. Secondly, don't waste too much time looking for legal advice. There is so much you can do without it; direct action is really really effective. And lastly, always let people collectivize themselves. I provided helpful tools but I ultimately stepped back often. I hardly even spoke at the meetings, I just listened and supported. I had not even lived there a full year yet, and many others had been there four to nine years. They need to be the loudest voices, the ones that decide on the intensity of the resistance.

*For inquiries, contra.fifeco@gmail.com*

# The forgotten fight of Okinawa and Self Determination

By Karen Smith

'That would be 500 yen' uttered the 20-something surfer with a 'naicha' (Okinawan for mainland Japanese) accent demanding that our family pay for parasols at Nakagusuku beach on Miyakojima Island, where my family on my mother's side come from. I will never forget that moment; the look of shock on my mother and my second-aunt's faces. The beach that they once knew to be untouched was now rammed with tourists and litter scattered everywhere. A hipster from the mainland peddling parasols and snorkeling gear from the back of his VW Van seemed to have claimed that space as his own to commodify.

I thought going back to Miyakojima would cleanse my eyes and ears, tired and sore from the noise of fighter jets and the hideous display of US military bases on Okinawa's main island. Instead, I saw more of the juxtaposed landscape of pristine nature and militarism present on the main island. Military trucks and bulldozers passed by, on their way to clear lands for housing complexes and stations for the Japanese Army. They were adorned with the Imperial Japanese flag, a painful reminder of Japan's fascist past, but also a real reminder that Japan has not moved on but backwards, into the terrifying reality that many still live to remember, including my grandparents.

Formerly known to the Chinese as the 'country of courtesy' the Ryukyu Kingdom (now Okinawa), are a group of islands that had its own bustling economy and served as an important trade route between South-east and East Asian countries. Made up of 150 islands, 60 of which are uninhabited, have various traditions, customs and languages that are distinct from one another, but all share the Okinawan spirit omnipresent across the archipelago. Purveyors of diplomacy and peaceful inter-state trading, the Ryukyu Kingdom was an empire in its own right.

The Kingdom of the Ryukyus was subsequently annexed in 1879 during the Meiji Restoration and became Okinawa prefecture. This, however, did not mean Okinawans were now Japanese, instead mere colonial subjects of Imperial Japan. My grandmother often recalls how she had to wear a 'Hogen Fuda', a heavy slab of wood around her neck as a punishment for speaking in Miyako. Ryukyuans, Ainus, Africans and Taiwanese, were among the many indigenous people put on display at Imperial Japan's 'Human Pavillion' (Human Zoo) held in Osaka in 1903.

Fast forward to World War 2, Okinawa was used as a buffer to fend off American forces attacking the mainland. To instil fear of the US and foster allegiance to Imperial Japan, the Japanese Army convinced up to 700 people from children to the elderly to commit mass suicide. The lives of one-third of the total population were lost to the war and rendered 90% of the population homeless. The Shuri Castle, once home to the Ryukyu Dynasty was burnt to rubble. These memories are some that haunt people like my grandmother, who understandably still cannot speak about them.

STOP
ILLEGAL WORK
違法工事
中止せよ!

Japan 'sacrificed' Okinawa not once, but twice. As part of Japan's post-war peace process, full administration of Okinawa was given to the US Being under US authority, Okinawa was excluded from Japan's post-War constitution as well as the US obligation to guarantee human rights as it was not formally part of the US

27 years of US occupation was fraught with human rights abuses against the locals with Agent Orange even being tested out as Okinawa was used as a base for the US brutal war in Vietnam. After enduring 27 years of injustice, hoping that under Japan's rule life would get better, Japan yet again betrayed the Okinawan people.

Currently, Okinawa holds over 70% of Japan's US military bases but accounts for a total of just 0.6% of Japan's total landmass. Our rainforest continues to serve as a 'Jungle Warfare' training centre for the US military. The gang-rape of a 12-year old schoolgirl by US servicemen in 1995 prompted a referendum a year later, on the future of US military bases in Okinawa. An overwhelming majority of 89% voted against it, but the central government were not legally obligated to respect the result. Ignoring the referendums are a regular occurrence. In February 2019 another referendum against another military base was ignored. The most devastating part of this is the fact that the new base is being built on Henoko Bay, home to two coral reefs, 300 endangered species and to the near-extinct Dugong, which will all be destroyed in the name of 'security'.

> the immobility of the native is condemned, unless they put an end to their colonization

In June 2020, the Japanese Prime Minister and openly fascist Shinzo Abe stepped down from his role citing health concerns. Abe, the longest-serving leader in Japan's history, had no shame in openly discussing his ambitions to revert Japan to its Imperial Wartime state. He was dedicated to denying important facts in Japan's political history, such as Japan's use of sex slaves and the forced mass suicides of Okinawan people during WW2.

Abe's successor, Yoshihide Suga, has vowed to continue Abe's policies into the future, meaning very little change on issues such as US militarism and cultural & ecological preservation in Okinawa.

But regardless of politics, one thing that has remained constant is the Okinawan will and drive to ensure that their culture and their right to self-determination is never forgotten.

Unlike in the mainland, Okinawans refuse to sing the Imperial Japan Anthem, and the cultural dance 'Eisa' remains a mainstay of the high school experience for Okinawan youth.

Protests outside US military bases are common in Okinawa. The majority of demonstrators are elderly Okinawans who remember the sordid, painful history of US militarism in their land.

Expressing too much dissent in Japan can have harsh consequences and is heavily frowned upon, but campaign groups such as No Base Henoko as well as the vibrant, active Okinawan community in Hawai'i are dedicated to shedding light on an issue that is seldom put on the international agenda.

In the words of Franz Fanon, the immobility of the native is condemned, unless they put an end to their colonization. Perhaps that is why Japan does everything possible to veto any efforts made by Okinawans and refuses to recognize us as indigenous, as that would automatically give us the legal right to claim back the lands that were forcibly taken from us.

Whilst the free movement of people remains a heavily scrutinized and over-reported topic, the free movement of nuclear weapons, military bases and overworked foreign workers across islands in the Asia-Pacific such as Okinawa goes widely underreported. Absence of the voices of Okinawans as well as Chamorros, Nauruans and Hawaiians are the reason why indigenous futures remain uncertain and are close to being pushed over the precipice of fascism and climate devastation.

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# JUMP OUT of the ELECTORAL CIS-TEM

By Zoe Lopez-Meraz

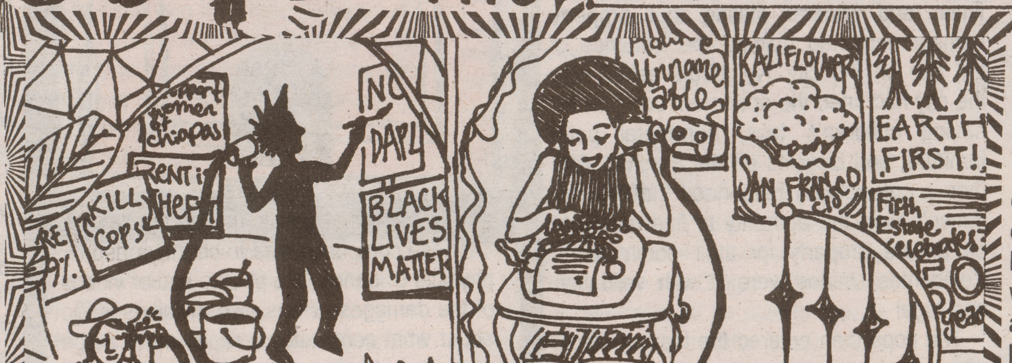
Someone accused me of trying to sell snake oil when I announced I was entering the City Council race. For anyone new to that term, it's saying that I'm tricking the people by trying to sell politics as any kind of solution to our problems.

They're not wrong. The world burns around us because of extractive capitalism as we pillage the earth for all her resources in exchange for fast fashion, depleted food systems, endless war, and fleeting comforts.

There have been many candidate forums and interviews, and really I have been asked basically three questions at this point:

1. What is my stance on the new stadium proposal?
2. What will I do about homelessness and housing?
3. Do I agree with defunding OPD?

These are important issues to talk about, but it's pretty clear where any even slightly left-leaning candidate sits in those discussions, and it's low-hanging fruit.



I want to talk about greed. I want to yell about resource hoarding. We are in over our heads because of unfettered capitalism. We treat the basic need of shelter as a business. We foam at the mouth over professional sports revenue. And by we, I mean the political system. I mean the hands exchanging shakes behind closed doors. I mean the people allowing countless lives to be lost as they wait for perfect policy and perfect candidates that will never happen.

I want to talk about rematriating this whole country. The divine feminine is a nurturing energy that has the stamina to get torn to shreds and keep showing up with grace. 2020 has been screaming for more yin, for more rest, to slow down and examine where we are and how we got here. But we keep barreling ahead, ignoring that our clothes are on fire and we're running on shards of glass right over a cliff with no bottom. We need feminine wisdom to lead with a resilient, forward-thinking heart. We need to end the culture of dominance and applaud softness and vulnerability. It is so much more powerful to be vulnerable than to be “tough”.

I want to talk about reparations. This country was built with the blood and sweat of colored bodies. And it's even commodified blackness at that. Blackness has won our wars, got us to the moon, raised our children, and the repayment is incarceration, predatory lending, and sterilization. As if that slow, strategic death wasn't enough, now they're just being murdered in broad daylight: sleeping in bed, birdwatching, jogging. And our country is still telling us to ask nicely for equality.

I want to talk about gender identity and neurodiversity and ableism. About collectivity and true sustainability.

As long as political discussions stay centered on the spending of resources and not on the effects of ego, extraction, and toxic masculinity, the world will continue to burn around us, filling our lungs with ash.

# Mutual Aid is our Secret Weapon

By Karma Bennett

The flip-side of the tribalism taking over America is a force sorely lacking on the left: the notion of community. If people can be driven to endanger their own health in support of a thinly-veiled con man, what might they do in support of a movement for self-actualization, freedom, & justice, and why aren't they?

Among 45's most ardent supporters are evangelicals. These are people who gather in community at least once a week. They look to their church for support and save their pennies to give back to that community. The community is stronger than rationality or rule of law. To wit, one of the first claims of sociology is that the rule of law of one's community has a stronger pull than the wider laws of society (anomie).

Look to moments when the left has won significant battles. The Civil Rights movement was also born in churches. The Black Panthers grew out of community members providing mutual aid through programs like school lunches. Unions are a powerful force in part because workers, in spending day after day together, can easily form communities. The hard work of forming a union is the strengthening of community to the degree that workers feel they can trust one another to keep the organizing of a union secret.

Other movements that have grown quickly are built of autonomous zones, like Occupy. People sharing food, shelter, childcare and medical supplies quickly develop community bonds.

Now let's assess where the left is at today. To those who want to fight climate change, how many are part of a community that meets weekly to work on this issue? Indeed the most successful group that has brought attention to the climate crisis are the student walk outs. Consider that students are inherently powerless. Their only power is in their pre-existing community.

I've been involved in countless lefty movements, most of them ineffective. I recall an Indymedia group I volunteered for in the nineties that was driven by one determined and amazing single mom. Despite her efforts, the group had only a handful of volunteers. I suggested they start having socials to bring in new people. But no, they said, these are not the kind of half-assed recruits they wanted. Stopping corporate oligarchy isn't supposed to be fun, they argued. You do it because you have to. Because it's necessary. Activism becomes a form of self-sacrifice. As it turns out, self-sacrifice isn't popular.

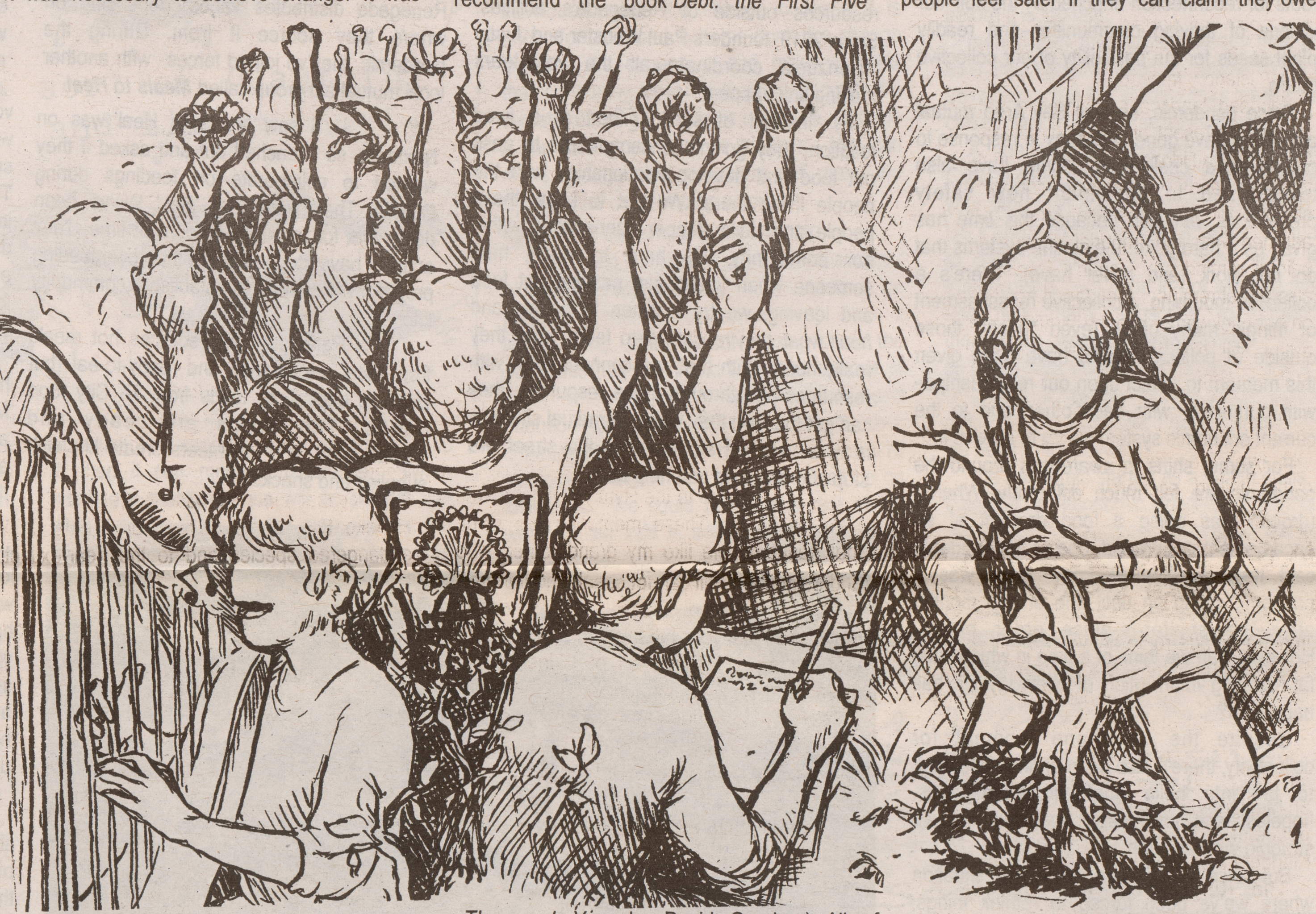
Compare this to a friend who explained why she still attends church even though at heart she doesn't believe in God. She explained: she has friends there. They sing songs together. Being a part of the church makes her feel good. I wonder, is the church weakened by her lack of belief? Or is it stronger because of the size of their community?

we might consider how our
MOVEMENTS make people feel.
are they showing up because they
feel obligated or guilty? or are they
EXCITED to be part of a group they
feel warmly towards, who shares their
VALUES? do they have fun?

Long before cancel culture was a term, the left has been overly careful of purifying our ranks to only the most devoted. Casual participants who are more interested in making friends and breaking bread are deemed unworthy and do not belong.

This point of view fails to recognize that devotion is only fostered through participation. Few people will take the time to read the pamphlets and learn the issues without the pull of community. So folks find their community elsewhere. There's more community in a casual Dungeons & Dragons group than in many activists organizing for change in their own neighborhoods! You will find that the organizers that last are the ones engendering community.

If you have found that you joined a rally or attended a political meeting because you *should,* not because you wanted to, you intuitively feel the heart of the problem. Years ago, I lived in a temporary autonomous zone formed to protest the poor monitoring of the sweatshops for my university's apparel. I remember being surprised how much I enjoyed doing tedious work like dishes and cleaning up. It felt like all labor was important, because all of it was necessary to achieve change. It was frustrating at times, and celebratory too. In community we build toward something together and that sparks an excitement for all that must be done. Perhaps there must be sacrifice for us to reach our goals. But it can't only be sacrifice. The surest way to get people excited to show up is to create a space that fuses those goals with a commitment to building bonds between members.



A lot of people like to joke that Gil Scot-Heron was wrong when he sang that the "The Revolution Will not be Televised," but they leave out the second half of the line, "the revolution will be live." If people don't come together to build the thing, the revolution won't happen in the first place.

"You'll not be able to stay home brother. You'll not be able to plug in, turn on and cop out..."

Through the connective power of the Internet, these words are more prescient than he could have imagined. Many of us care deeply about the issues that plague society, but that caring happens in isolation. You will not be able to participate by blacking out your Facebook avatar or posting a story on insta-Twitter. Those things do help with advocacy, but in the face of mask-off fascism, advocacy is no longer what is needed. You will not be able to Instagram your way to the revolution, brother, because community organizing doesn't happen through a screen.

### What Is Community?

I'm not saying community can't be built on the Internet. Perhaps at this point it would help to establish what community *is.*

The root word in community is *munos* meaning debt. A community is a group of people who are in debt to one another. This mutual debt builds trust. (For a thorough exploration of debt and community, I highly recommend the book *Debt: the First Five Thousand Years* by David Graeber.) All of society is a web of acts done for one another. Before market economies meant that debt could be scrupulously measured, the daily routines of life engendered community. The lawyer who defends you in court could not do so without the farmer who makes her food, while the farmer could not share his crops without the construction worker who builds the roads, on and on we are in debt to each other, tracing back to the original bonds of debt you owe to the family that fed you and changed your diapers.

However, capitalism decreases our communal bonds by giving us *immunity.* There's that *munos* root word again, this time meaning *free of debt.* By putting an exact price on everything, we feel free of obligation to the restaurant that feeds us, or the lawyer who defends us, or the crew who lays asphalt. We may debate whether the labor of the lawyer is worth twice that of a social worker, but it is taken as an assumption that everyone is better off with the attachment of some exchange value for the work they contribute to society. We come to believe that we are truly immune to our debts to society. This leads to isolation and distrust on an epic scale.

### Mutual Aid Is the Key to Community

It is only in service to one another that community is built. I am not speaking of the good feeling that people get from volunteering. I'm speaking of the gratitude people feel for what has been done for them at no price. If you preside over a local club, you will feel indebted to the secretary who takes the time to write out the notes and the editor who takes time to publish the newsletter, just as they are grateful to you for taking the time and energy to organize the meetings. If these roles were paid, they would engender entitlement, as participants debate whether your contribution matches your compensation. Stripped of this framework, these acts instead create gratitude, and that gratitude inspires further commitment. It's through such small acts that relationships are fostered, and a web of these relationships make up a community.

There is a crisis of community in American society. Immunity, the community killer, has become the goal of American life. How many would rather drive to the store than trouble their neighbor to borrow a cup of sugar? Though true immunity is impossible for society to function, people feel safer if they can claim they owe nothing to anyone. But without these debts they become increasingly isolated. In isolation we can't organize against injustice.

### What Can We Do?

We would benefit from putting community at the heart of our organizing efforts. Getting to know one another, building trust and cooperation are just as important as creating agit-prop and organizing rallies.

We might consider how our movements make people *feel.* Are they showing up because they feel obligated or guilty? Or are they excited to be a part of a group they feel warmly towards, who shares their values? Do they have fun? Do they trust one another? What do organizers know of the lives of the other participants? Of what struggles they face? Of who is important to them? If they were snatched up by Trumplethinskin's goons, how long before those in your group would notice?

When we look out for one another and share resources, these acts of mutual aid have the added power of fostering community.

A movement built of isolated activists is easy to infiltrate or destroy. Instead we should strive for more than a gathering of people with a common goal. We can make our spaces a third place, a home away from home. While we tear down the state, we can also work towards the future we want to build through acts of kindness and generosity.

**Slingshot free stuff**
We'll send you a random assortment of back issues for the cost of postage. Send $4 for 2 lbs. Free if you're an infoshop or library.
slingshotcollective.org

# TOWARDS MUTUAL AID DURING COV*D-19

droolz + spewz

MUTUAL AID IS NOT CHARITY! IT IS AN ATTACK! -unknown

Mutual aid is a long tradition of reciprocity and camaraderieship, both materially and interpersonally. When people work together, identifying our needs and thinking of creative ways to fulfill them for one another, we break apart false ideas that we are separated from each other. By way of mutual aid, we grow roots for reconnection enriched by the soil–our visions of thriving communities–and readily plant seeds for the possibility of our collective future.

Since pandemic, several Bay Area mutual aid efforts have gone underway in response to compounded challenges. Some have also transformed to implement new safety precautions, but also because this time has given us a hard poke to examine systems that do not work (and never have). There's a collective mourning, a collective reassessment of things; many of us (even *gasp!* those outside of political circles) have been given this moment to reflect upon our relationships–with ourselves, with each other, and to the current economic system we try to survive in.

For some, shifts in awareness around the pandemic are felt much differently. When I (droolz) was doing a food drop-off at an encampment in Oakland, one of the residents said they didn't even know there was a pandemic going on until one or two months after the shelter-in-place order began. However, can we think of a time in which such far-reaching interruption of everyday life has happened?

Despite the opportune moment for collectivity, there's also been an increased risk to fall into hella apathetic headspaces, hopelessness, and despair...especially as we struggle with isolation.

But since we've been put in this situation where we've been forced to rethink things, what possibilities are there for mutual aid in this moment and what do they hold for the future? By thinking in this realm, can we maybe hit pause of the normal flow of hopelessness and fear?

In terms of food security, many current mutual aid projects addressing these issues actually didn't stem from the pandemic, since they have been deeply entrenched within communities for as long as they have existed. Groups of people are choosing to see now that they have some degree of autonomy to gather people and resources together, and in doing so, expand our networks across communities

The food redistribution groups mentioned below are making a mockery of overconsumption and what is considered "work" (the the capitalist system) by recapturing food "waste" and in turn feeding people delicious, healthy food. They do this through a decentralized power model (with everyone participating as they can), helping build a different foundation of basic health for houseless communities. In return, new systems of care and love begin to form from within, and communities can begin to change.

...I (spewz) grew up in Fremont, CA. The wealthy bedroom city full of townhouses and Silicon Valley types city treats houselessness like a big blister on its face, and does anything it can to brush unhoused folks under the proverbial rug. While there is a lack of allocated resources for the unhoused in Fremont, money is spent on cops and homeless sweeps in the name of development. Seeing my friends and a mutual aid organization rise to try and meet the (usually apolitical) town's needs gave me an unbelievable hope for the future.

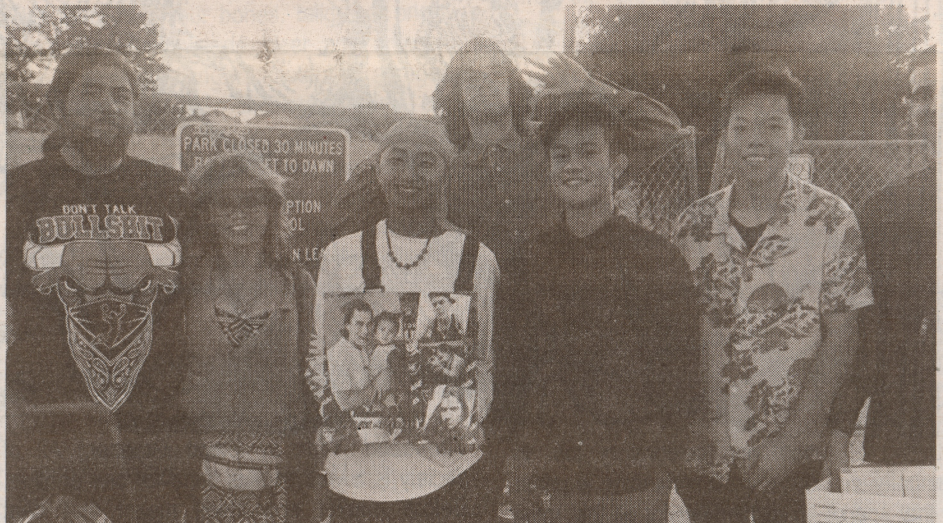
***Renegade Feedings*** is a grassroots group which distributes food and supplies to unhoused people in Fremont, CA while working to connect them with greater resources outside of Renegade's abilities. Since 2019, founders Paul Webster and Justin Valenzuela coordinate all the volunteers making shit happen.

**P:** "Instead of serving food at a fixed location, they go into encampments to pass out food and develop relationships with the people living there. We get to know these people and build deeper connections within our community. It's hard to really help someone when you're just passing out food and leaving...we try to listen to people and *hear what they're saying*–to learn what they really need. With that, we connect them with resources and through those resources, they can get the help they want. Our usual situation is when we see someone on the street, we stop and ask if we can help out."

Renegade visits two to four major encampments in Fremont regularly, but most of their distro is to less formal arrangements. They use 4-5 groups of volunteers to drive to specific areas in Fremont, and if they see someone (even just one person) camping out, they go up and ask if they need any resources and then take it from there. The food Renegade distributes varies, depending on where they source it from. During the pandemic, they've joined forces with another local mutual aid group called ***Meals to Heal.***

**J :** "I saw Meals to Heal was on Nextdoor, so I reached out and asked if they wanted to collaborate on feedings during COVID. They were like, 'Bet.' We've been doing that for a steady amount of time. They actually have stopped doing their own feeding program while trying to establish a community kitchen."

Renegade also sources hot meals from local restaurants, and ready-to-eat (but close to expiration) foods from Tri City food banks. The meals are ready and prepackaged, and volunteers create kits with supplies and snacks.



Renegade is trying to get their nonprofit status going. They're also currently working on a documentary! Check them out at Renegadefeedings.ORG!

THERE'S BEEN A COLLECTIVE MOURNING, A COLLECTIVE RE-ASSESMENT OF THINGS; MANY OF US HAVE BEEN GIVEN THIS MOMENT TO REFLECT UPON OUR RELATIONSHIPS- WITH OURSELVES, WITH EACH OTHER, AND THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CISTEM WE TRY TO SURVIVE IN.

When Renegade Feedings first started, it was just a thing to do with friends once a month. But later on, they realized that they could build a network in which everyone could be involved.

**J:** "It's really all about community. We're really asking: 'How can we truly build a community where, if someone needs help, we can provide that help?' We're fighting this parasitic, individualistic, capitalistic society where we try to take-take-take and do everything ourselves. Everyone's different, but we can all collaborate..and together we can make better decisions....

***Food Not Bombs East Bay*** is an all volunteer-run organization established in 1991 which cooks anywhere from 60-100 hot meals six days a week, and serves at *People's Park*. The Park feedings have sadly seen a decline in people showing up, so FNB recently started distributing the excess hot food out to Oakland encampments. Silver Zahn works in multiple food justice organizations throughout the East Bay.

**Silver:** "When the pandemic hit, I had just started volunteering with EBFNB. Most of their volunteers are older folks who are immuno-compromised; luckily I'm very able bodied, so I needed to step in because these people couldn't show up."

In the kitchen, normally all are welcome, but now we have to deal with logistics of limiting the number of volunteers we can have working at one time. Problems have popped up, since a lot of people want to volunteer but can't commit to a regular schedule...organizing random volunteers around a schedule has been messy. Right now, we want concrete people who can show up for specific times on specific days".

Throughout the pandemic, FNB EB has also been doing their regular distribution of prepackaged foods to encampments throughout Oakland and Berkeley.

How this usually works is that volunteers pick up refrigerated packaged foods a few days from their posted expiration date from a national distributor in Oakland. The volunteers then load up their bike carts (or car) and ride around, looking for new and familiar faces to offer food to. Sometimes, water in reusable bottles is distributed, and when the pandemic started, they were even distributing donated hand sanitizer bottles from the students at UC Berkeley.

***Food Not Bombs in Arcata, CA***, has been occurring for over 30 years now. The origins of the group are mysterious, seeing as it has been picked up and passed around by different community homes and groups over the years. It shape-shifts the way most things do in this town, due to its constant fluctuations of being a travelling hub.

At this time, the Bayside Community Hall is hosting us alongside Humboldt Mutual Aid efforts. They reached out to us when the pandemic hit, incidentally in perfect timing. The community house we were cooking out of had asked us to stop cooking there since they have an elder and a newborn living in their home. The transition was seamless and worked out fantastically.

"Our operations have changed a lot since the days of bike carts and the huge plaza demonstrations that people associate with our chapter. We have had to switch to distributing food in compostable to-go containers, because before the pandemic we used communal dishes and a wash station at our servings. Using these containers has raised our expenses. Luckily, we were given a grant by a local organization to supplement our

funds for the next year as we adapt to the changes brought on by the pandemic.

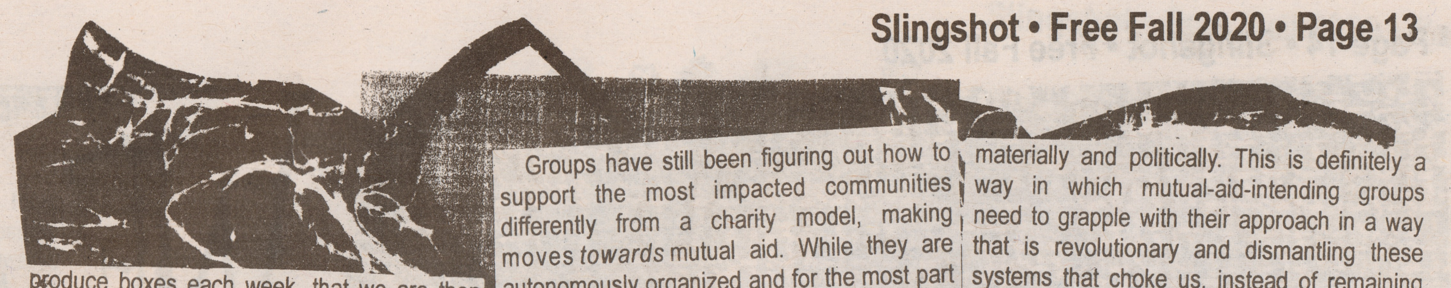
There have been some struggles with conflicting opinions regarding the extent of safety protocols being put in place as food distributors between individuals and collectives in our area. We are adapting and growing through a shared motivation and interest for restoring food waste and being a presence advocating for non-violent direct actions."

Our friend Silver also helps out with the ***North Oakland Restorative Justice Council***, which put together a distribution project in response to the pandemic. The reason the distro is on a three-week cycle is that the donations need to sit for two weeks to "quarantine." As a collaboration with and for the community, they get specific donations from the community and make up to 500 "packages" with hot meals, hygiene products, groceries, batteries, tents, and other personal items on request that people need. They then spend all day driving around to encampments and delivering the kits.

In the face of crumbling infrastructure and climate crisis, in addition to redistribution, it is more important now than ever to cut our dependence on the corporate food supply and be able to sustainably grow and provide our own communities with the healthy food we need. Urban farms and guerilla gardens are making this possible within our cities.

Leah Van Winkle told us that at the **Gill Tract Community Farm** in Albany, CA, ***the Gill Tract Farm Coalition*** has been working toward food/land access and food sovereignty in the East Bay for nearly a decade. With several partnering groups, including ***Sogorea Te Land Trust***, ***Black Earth Farms***, and the ***Gill Tract Herb Collective***, they've been growing food and herbs and distributing them for free to the community from the all-volunteer run farm.

**Leah:** "When COVID hit, our work continued and new opportunities to feed the community came our way. Working with local organization Fresh Approach, we've received some funding from the USDA Farmers to Families Foodbox program to source local, organic produce from farmers around the greater Bay Area. We are primarily working with Latinx farmers in Salinas, CA, who have lost virtually all other markets for their produce. We then pack 1000 CSA-style



produce boxes each week, that we are then able to freely distribute to the local community!"

With 10+ distribution partners, they are reaching folks all over the Bay - primarily those of marginalized identity living under the poverty level. They've heard countless testimonies that these boxes are providing the cleanest, freshest food a lot of these families have ever had access to, greatly furthering the mission of food access for all!

Groups have still been figuring out how to support the most impacted communities differently from a charity model, making moves *towards* mutual aid. While they are autonomously organized and for the most part not funded by anyone in particular (in fact, pretty much every week are scrambling for resources), true mutual aid requires both parties to collaborate and exchange. Members of these groups share a common vision for a liberated future, one in which they don't have to exist because everyone is able to meet each other's needs in community. However, it is yet to be stated how the recipients of the aid are in turn participating in some kind of reciprocal process with the volunteers, materially and politically. This is definitely a way in which mutual-aid-intending groups need to grapple with their approach in a way that is revolutionary and dismantling these systems that choke us, instead of remaining ontologically separate.

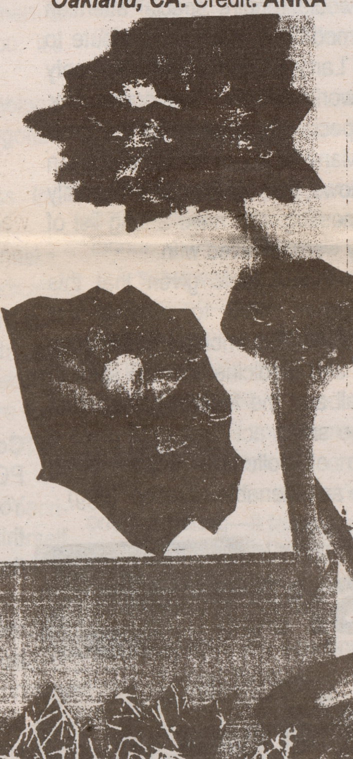
If you've ever done food distribution, you've seen how much work it is, and how frustrating it can be because it's never enough, but it can still be a break from the everyday monotonous way of accepting the conditions we live in. You're agreeing that shit is fucked up and the worst thing to be is immobile. As both of us continue to work in food distribution, we are also looking for ways to build interpersonal relationships across communities, to get to work on bringing some shit down. As we thwart attempts at mass pacification by getting up to do something, what is actually our purpose and how are we getting there?

Because true mutual aid allows for us to envision what we will grow, and practice doing it, building upon intra-communal resilience...once we have prepared the soil.

***Do you see a need? Maybe you should try to fulfill it! Consider plugging into already forming groups, rely on the communities for networks, or start a group yourself to make safe and healthy food accessible in your area.***

***Please feel free to email Slingshot and give us updates about what cool stuff you are doing in your town :)***

***Food Not Bombs volunteers rach and Dara mask up and prepare to distribute food to encampments in the Lower Bottoms, West Oakland, CA.*** Credit: **ANKA**



# THOSE RADICAL SPACES

Compiled by Jesse D. Palmer

Radical DIY events spaces, libraries and zine shops are doing what they can to provide community and alternative resources as the pandemic drags on. If there is one near you, please give generously since rent is still due and a lot of income has dried up. Here are some additions to the 2021 Slingshot Organizer, as well as come corrections. An updated on-line contact list is at slingshotcollective.org/radical-contact-list/

### What's Left Records – Colorado Springs, CO

An underground/DIY oriented record store w/ zines and events. 829 N Circle Colorado Springs, CO 80909 719-203-5826

### A European Tour

Following are a number of spaces in France and one in Switzerland sent in by our friend Giz in Marseille:

+ Mille babords 61, rue consolat - 13001 Marseille, France
+ Manifesten 59 rue Thiers - 13001 Marseille
+ La Salle Gueule - 8, rue d'Italie - 13006 Marseille, France
+ L'élégante - 8, rue du petit Goye - 63600 Ambert, France
+ L'étoile noire - 5, rue saint jean - 02000 Laon, France
+ La rétive - 42, rue du faubourg d'Auvergne - 30100 Alès, France
+ La Lezarde at the 66 grand rue - 30270 Saint Jean du Gard, France
+ Espace Autogéré Rue du docteur César-Roux, 30 1005 Lausanne Switzerland

### Bookspace - Columbus OH

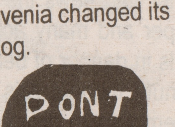
A mobile and on-line radical bookseller Bookspace that sells books and zines at flea markets, poetry readings, and other events in Columbus. They are trying to get a space to host events. bookspacecolumbus.com

### 1418 Fulton Daily Market – Fresno, CA

A PoC owned community centered bookshop that hosts printing and zine-making workshops, book releases, bike club meet-ups and photo walks. 1418 Fulton St Fresno, CA 93721 559-697-3044 1418fulton.com

### Corrections to 2021 Slingshot Organizer

- Bluestockings Books in New York closed. The project is going to restart at 116 Suffolk Street soon.
- Blackbird in Chico, CA has closed.
- Peace Iowa lost its space – pocket only.
- Just Books / Réalta Civic and Social Space in Northern Ireland is closed.
- Infocentrum Salé in Prague, Czech Republic has closed.
- Avtonomna Tovarna Rog at Trubarjeva cesta 72, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia changed its name from Socialni Center Rog.

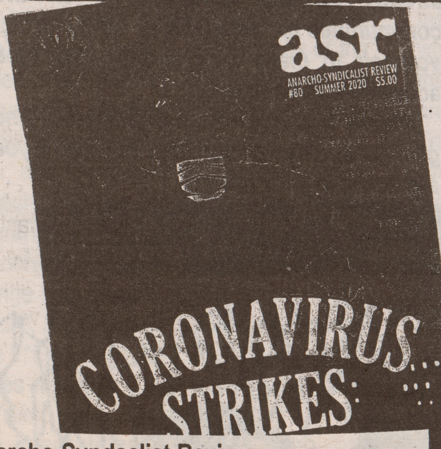


# WE READ IT

## Slingshot looks at newsletters, newspapers, instead of our

These are publications that came to Long Haul Info Shop. It's amazing that they are still cracking away in this age of extinction. They are kinda hard to read since Covid-19 and the 2020 Elections not only take up most of the air space around town but the pages of these works.

Most of these papers could use your eyes and mind or they might disappear. We also received new issues of Fifth Estate, The Lavender Menace, Razor Cake, The Match Earth Island Journal and the Rebel Worker. We just got them at deadline and think they are all worth hunting down.



**Anarcho-Syndaclist Review**
#80 Summer 2020 $5.00
PO Box 42531, Philadelphia PA. 19101

This long running periodical prints 3 times a year. They seems to use their time between editions to write savvy articles about current events as well as having a deep understanding of the historical precedent of anarchism. This issue not only looks at how Covid intersects with radicals but also topics exploring issues effecting Chile, South Africa, the Press and the ever dreaded 2020 elections. There is a fair amount of things that would interest a progressive activist with articles showing a deep concern over issues like labor, poverty, war and police abuse. The approach here is bookish and has a sharp conviction of their brand of radicalism. The pages are dense with words and what graphics you find hardly appear larger than your thumb. This alone could scare most frivolous journeys into this offset-printed magazine. To further induce yawning the piece on Covid by Ian MacKay almost delves into academic-speak. This issue has a 3 part series dissecting how Marxist scholars misinterpret Proudhon's view of the Paris Commune. There is very little to get the impression that the writers occupies a street and talks to strangers (but then again most of us are lacking in that area). Kropotkin seems a very real person to the point that the people today walking around ready to change the world will be held back by this old way of thinking.

I almost want to get a subscription. (egg)

**Change Links**
September 2020
$20 for 1 year subscription
PO Box 34236, L.A. CA 90034-0236

A newspaper for hardcore progressives in the Los Angeles area. Regular features include write-ups of local concerns like abusive police, a community calendar that covers the gambit of activist concerns and a regular column from Mumia. This issue warns of a group of astroturf activists attempting to change the Pacifica radio network for the worse. And in other bad news the Peace Center where this paper and many activists groups operate out of is in danger of being sold. It seems that the minute founder Aris Anagnos died his son is attempting to dissolve the board and destroy this vital organizing space. You are cordially invited to intervene. (egg)

The Gainesville Iguana
A progressive newsletter and events calendar
September 2020
Vol. 34, Issue 9
Welcome back students!
August elections favored candidates for social change
Renters rights update

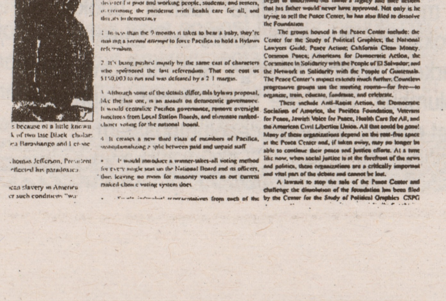
**The Gainesville Iguana**
September 2020 $15 for 1 year subscription
PO Box 14712, Gainesville FL 32604

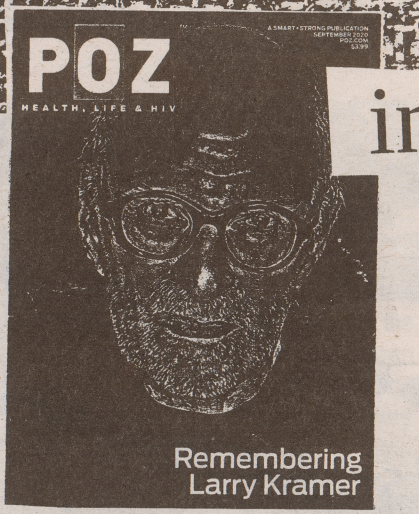
I read this during a stultifying heatwave--which is a good setting to regard this Northern Floridian activist newspaper. It's long running and consistent voice makes the factoids reliable. It's a bit mainstream for me. I understand the norm for that region is that its full of reactionary (right wing) people so they are taking a chance putting themselves out there. Still, for my tastes the September issue has too much election items compelling the reader to run to the embrace of the Democrat party.

Thankfully there are other issues covered; news of the local university being challenged about using prison labor, a local river about to be given to Coca Cola to sell as bottled water and a farewell note written by Congressman John Lewis. There's a directory of activist groups in the area and even a wrap-up of news items worthy of attention but couldn't make print due to space limitations.

There's a piece on a local school that was named for a confederate soldier and a lyncher now being renamed to celebrate an Africa American woman physicist...*who worked on the atomic bomb in WW2*. They don't expound much on the harm that invention has brought to humans and the living planet. At least her bio is fleshed out. The same is done for a couple of local activists given obituaries. But more impressive I found out Scott Camille is alive by reading about an award he just got. He was a soldier that occupied Vietnam. When he came home he helped organized the Winter Soldier forums where soldiers gave public testimony about war crimes the US military enacted. He then helped to create the VVAW (Vietnam Veterans Against the War) where they held a rally outside the gates of the White House. There they called the president a "mother fucker", denounced the military and threw their war medals over the police barricade. This should be a weekly protest in the modern age -- that simple act will make the orange man flee to the panic room.

Worth reading to fight the power (egg)

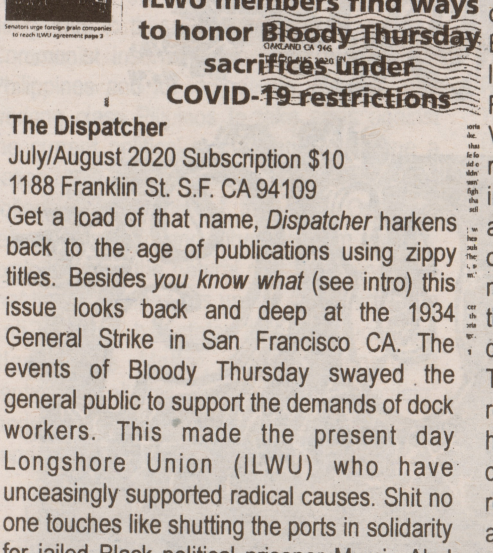

GET CONNECTED – CHANGE THE WORLD!
change links
STOP THE WARS - PEACE, EQUALITY & JUSTICE FOR ALL!
Do NOT sign New Day Pacifica's Same Old Anti-Democratic Petition
SAVE THE PEACE CENTER! STOP THE SALE!
Irreversible change



**POZ**
September 2020 $3.99
subscriptions@poz.com

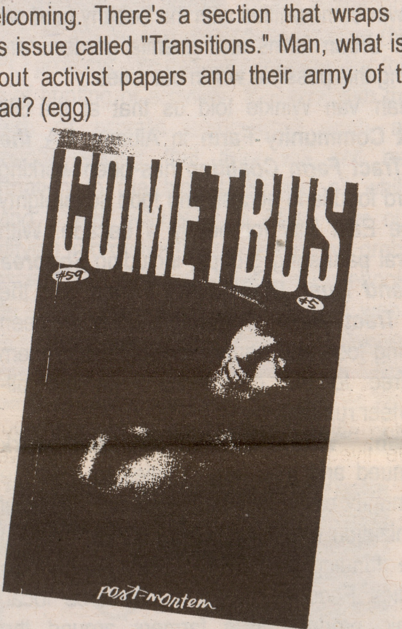
A solid production that means life and death for its readers. This is a glossy magazine with some fancy layouts and graphics. At times the ads almost take over having the energy and verve you'd see in the mainstream press. Quite a few news items and reporting on AIDS medicine will would require special attention for the uninformed. This issue pays tribute to the passing of Larry Kramer -- who not only impacted the world and the Gay community, but made a special impression on the crew making POZ. Many facets of his life are given space. Who knows, that old person irrationally yelling at the meeting may have a long list of cool things they were involved with.

Covid is a prominent topic given that this community learned how to survive the pandemic of AIDS. This monthly publication mixing science and medicine with the spirit to take on city hall and the federal government makes for some smart activists. POZ gives a good example of collective action being utilized to solve an untenable situation. (egg)


Published by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union
THE DISPATCHER
THE INSIDE NEWS
ILWU members find ways to honor Bloody Thursday sacrifices under COVID-19 restrictions

**The Dispatcher**
July/August 2020 Subscription $10
1188 Franklin St. S.F. CA 94109

Get a load of that name, *Dispatcher* harkens back to the age of publications using zippy titles. Besides *you know what* (see intro) this issue looks back and deep at the 1934 General Strike in San Francisco CA. The events of Bloody Thursday swayed the general public to support the demands of dock workers. This made the present day Longshore Union (ILWU) who have unceasingly supported radical causes. Shit no one touches like shutting the ports in solidarity for jailed Black political prisoner Mumia Abul Jamal, as well as in protest of the US invasion of Iraq. Everything in here relates to ILWU and their allies. This issue features a full page tribute to John Lewis and looks at his lifelong work expanding Civil Rights. This issue also has a call to support the dock workers of the Pacific Northwest who are in conflict with grain companies who hope to break their agreements. These companies even started a lawsuit the week of X-mas demanding protesting workers pay up to $250,000. This article is pretty ripe with traditional union jargon which isn't the case for the other pieces. Duller fare does makes up a portion of the read -- small news items like someone retiring or a zoom conference reminds me of a college newspaper. Dispatcher is a newsletter in newspaper format. They have enough money to sport full color designs on each page. That and the use of open space makes the world of a labor union seem wealthy and welcoming. There's a section that wraps up this issue called "Transitions." Man, what is it about activist papers and their army of the dead? (egg)



**Cometbus** #59 Post-Mortem $5
PO Box 1318 Cooper Station, NY NY 10276

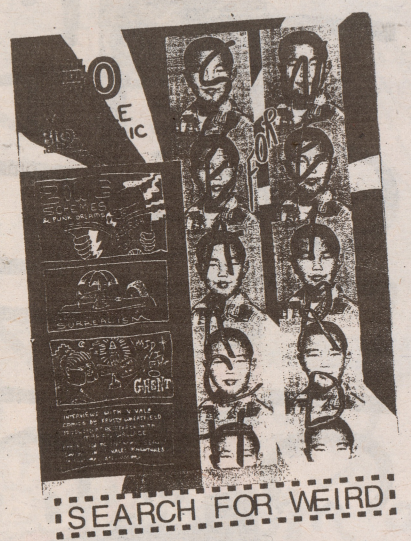
You can glume from the title that the theme of this issue alludes to the ever popular sense that we entered the end times (yet published before Covid). But don't despair, when you see the parade of weirdos and their projects you'll be in safe harbor. You will get a taste of the hustles that they divine to keep their head above water as they make use of their short time here to create a new world.

This issue opens with people who made independent record labels and bands, which is a given considering this zine's pedigree coming from the 1980's punk scene. This then takes it a step farther featuring people who created movements like Riot Grrrl, people who opened book stores like Bound Together Books or performance and community spaces like Intrepid. Comic Publishers like Fantagraphics. Squats. Radical Archives. Vegan donuts. Skateboard Mags. There's a real sense that making a counter cultural institution is normal and necessary. Special attention is paid to the humans who make organizations and how they're flawed and mortal. Many questions are poised including the hard fact that our people get old, sick and die while keeping the doors open.

This is in zine format with large clear type to relax your eyes after looking at a screen for 7 hours. It makes for brisk reading. The 23 chapters are fairly short so that its easy to read while waiting for public transit or to sneak a peek while at work. It's also a joy to read. Ordinary info is given flourishes often one sees in creative writing classes but here the word play is adept. Also unusual is that in this age of internet searches the main body of info is extracted from conversations Aaron had. These interviews span a wide range of people from 1960's radicals to Occupy Wall street radicals. The whole thing is designed for impact....and to nudge readers to look at things in a deep way. (egg)

# For You

## magazines, zines cell phones



**Search for Weird / V. Vale Bio-Comic** #0 $10
www.krustywheatfield.com
www.researchpubs.com

Artist Krusty Wheatfield transcribes talks with independent publisher V. Vale. The art is mostly minimalistic (even sloppy) while the life story has a grandness. Who knew that young Vale lived in an adopted family who were Black? Who knew that he got a $100 check from Allen Ginsberg and that set the motion for him to start printing the punk newspaper Search & Destroy? Krusty goes kinda deep with the details of Vale's life in a tone that is humorous and generally delightful. This is the first of many comics on Vale to come. Good if you want to peek behind the scenes of a counter culture and get quirky personal anecdotes. Better than the internet. (egg)

STEVE VON TILL
SÓLSTAFIR
NECROT
death won't wait
INTER ARMA
FLEXI DISC INCLUDED
Also
ORANSSI PAZUZU CARACH ANGREN
VILE CREATURE YEAR OF THE KNIFE ONSLAUGHT

**Decibel**
September 2020
$6 or $30 for 1 Year Subscription

This monthly glossy magazine covers the vast and diverse world music related to Metal and Hardcore Punk. World wide in scope. This issue talks to people making shit in Canada, Sweden, Idaho, Portland and Oakland. This issue has a lot of content that's very much aware and supportive of the Black Lives Matter uprising since George Floyd's lynching. In general this publication sides with enlighten people (woke?)--though there is a tirade/editorial this issue about a co-worker that smells of sexism. Thankfully this publication distances itself with right wing ideology. Interesting since there's a large segment of this music scene that relishes in being mean and stupid.

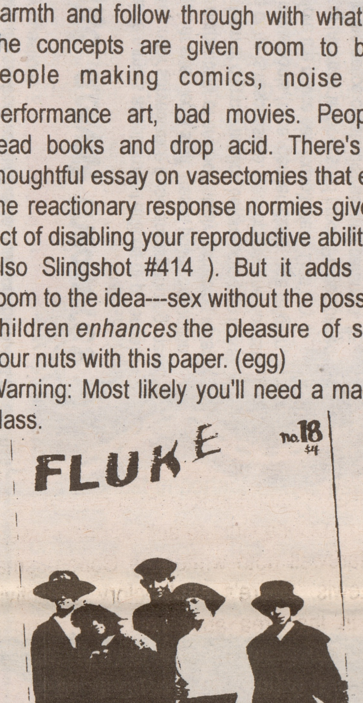
Decibel also gives space to makers of craft beer this time featuring Black owned businesses. A fascinating regular feature is an interview with a mother of a gigging heavy metal-er. The personalities you get go beyond the generic images of long hair growling men though they do get a lion share of the stage here. Decibel covers a wide range of expression under the banner of loud, heavy and fast music. Even if you don't understand the sound these people are making its written about in a way that compels the imagination. If you look at it all as a facet of a cutting edge artist movement you might get what the noise is about. You might actually see people creating a different reality than the sterile strip mall that's eating the planet. (egg)

Baited Area

**Baited Area** #1 $10(WHYYYY!)
www.baited-area.com

You leave the party away from the popular crowd who are upwardly mobile and carefree. Just on the threshold are people making shit, commenting on reality. Armed with surrealism and hacked technology. This publication is composed of short (but in-depth) talks with these people. They are friends so there's warmth and follow through with what's said. The concepts are given room to breathe. People making comics, noise music, performance art, bad movies. People who read books and drop acid. There's also a thoughtful essay on vasectomies that explores the reactionary response normies give to the act of disabling your reproductive abilities (see also Slingshot #414 ). But it adds another room to the idea---sex without the possibility of children *enhances* the pleasure of sex. Cut your nuts with this paper. (egg)

Warning: Most likely you'll need a magnifying glass.



**Fluke** #18 $4
PO Box 1547, Phoenix AZ 85001

*Fluke No. 18* has a little bit of everything for everyone. From skater culture to hobo graffiti to punk shows - all cracks of alternative arts and culture were reached with this edition.

One of the most prominent pieces was an interview with Susan A. Phillips, doctor in anthropology and researcher of “gangs, graffiti, and the US prison system since 1990.” Her interview tapped into various graffiti scenes throughout the U.S. Phillips speaks on early taggers like hobo artist A-No.1 and rail rider buZ blurr. She comments on the social aspect of graffiti and its position as a medium to give the silenced a voice. Overall, a very interesting interview with great takes.

A connecting link in this edition was artist buZ blurr. buZ is not only not only mentioned by Susan Phillips, but also in an interview with lead singer of The Dicks/Sister Double Happiness Gary Floyd. Gary's interview shifted into its own thing too shedding light on his experience as a gay punk in Austin, Texas and opening for Nirvana.

buZ, himself, wrote a short piece and created some art about his friend, filmmaker Bill Daniel. Bill had his own interview with Fluke and spoke about zines, the everlasting influence of *Cometbus*, and how he began looking at hobo graffiti. The way the zine is laid out gives it a very fluid feel. The various interviews that mention buZ definitely gives this edition a “small world” impression and offers a rad perspective into how community is created in alternative spaces.

I think one of the coolest aspects of this edition are the various anecdotes spread throughout it. One of my favorites was “Affle House 1999” written by *Fluke* author/curator Matthew Thompson. The anecdotes do a great job of pulling at the strings of nostalgia. Sick photos, like some from photographer Sergej Vutuc, work with the anecdotes and transport the reader inside these intimate settings - giving them a chance to look around and stay for a while.

Overall, this was a very enjoyable edition. It is filled with more amazing art and stories than I could review here. It is a great pick-me-up for anyone who misses the sense of community and friendship during these tumultuous times - or equally for those who are looking for inspiration to start off their hobo graffiti adventure. (Alexis)

# Calm Down -and- FIGHT!

Continued from Page 1

and media emphasize fear, division and hate, most parts of our un-mediated lives are not like that at all.

The people we actually know and interact with day-to-day are mostly okay – spending lives caring about our friends, our pets and gardens, and our family and neighbors. Sure there are some mean and abusive people out there and not everything goes great all the time, but overall people are doing their best, taking care of stuff around them and giving a shit.

So when engaging with the ways in which things are apocalyptic – the earth is threatened, the economy is collapsing, armed racists are killing people – we have to balance the awareness of being in a time of unprecedented danger against our lived reality. What type of risk are we really in today? When danger is immediate, one has to jump out of the way, but facing generalized risk means there is a little time to think and plan.

We cannot know what crazy things the world will throw at us next. What matters is not so much a specific 10 point plan, but developing and practicing values that can help guide us no matter what comes up. Caring about other people – being generous not selfish – being creative not boring and grim — and supporting each individual to pursue what pleases them are good places to start. These values lead to mutual aid, cooperation, and relating to others without ownership or rulers. Communities and systems can be organized from each according to ability and to each according to need. We can cooperate to get what we need without exploiting others or concentrating power.

Environmentally sustainable values focus on using land and resources mindfully and only for what we need, not for greed or profit. We need to value beauty and fun more highly than cheapness, speed or efficiency.

Power grabs, increased repression and chaos are related to a dam breaking — releasing pressure built up over decades of wealth being concentrated at the top while regular people's income and wellbeing has stagnated and declined. The pace of technological and social change has finally become unmanageable and a way we individually experience it is that everything feels out of control. But this hasn't come out of nowhere – we've been the frog in the gradually warming pop. We're realizing —I hope before it is too late — that we're about to get cooked.

The rulers causing these unsustainable conditions are trying to turn ordinary people against each other lest we all unite against them – intentionally stoking divisions based on race, urban vs. rural, employment sector, and other made-up divisions.

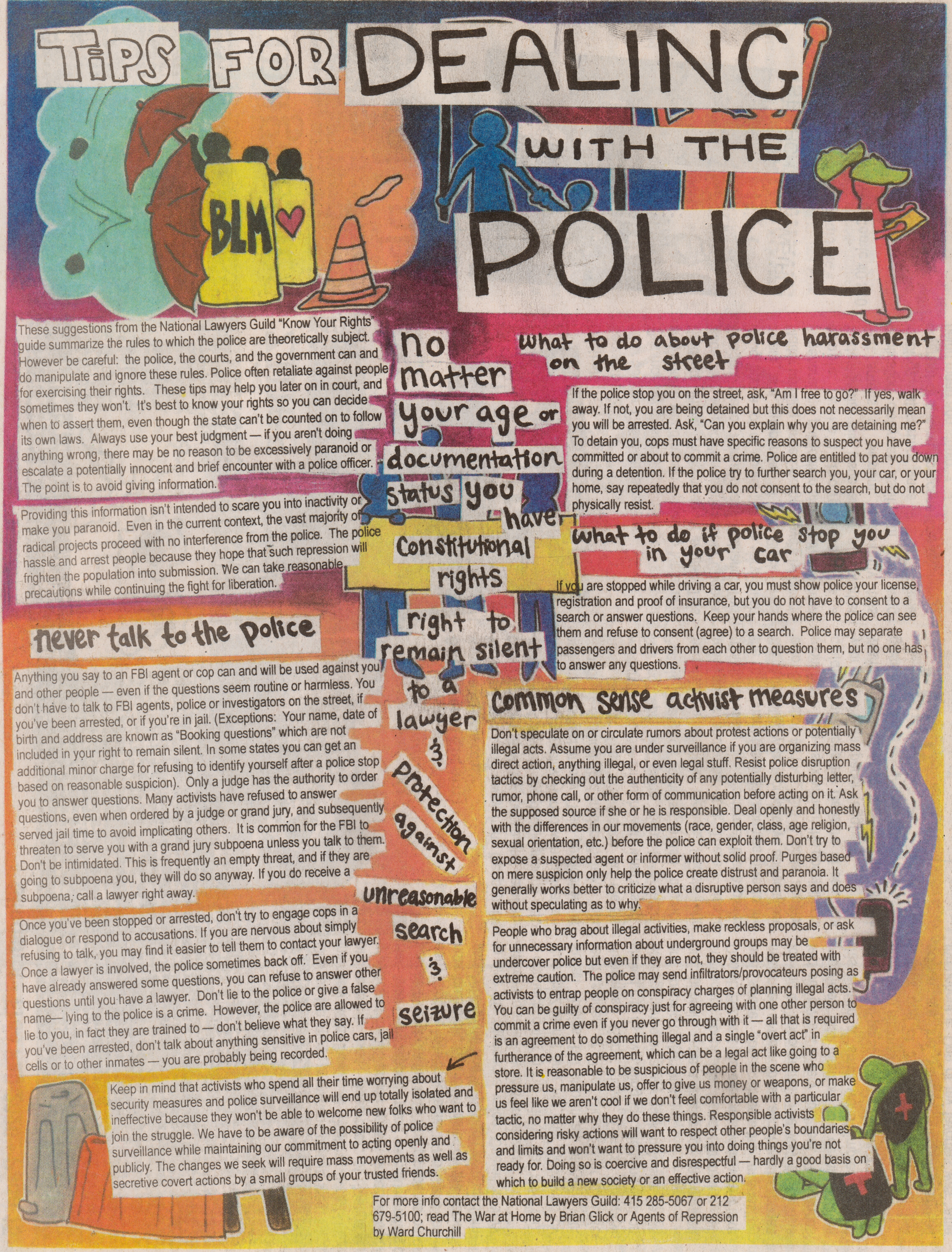
When you're in pain, you want to lash out at someone, but what we need now is solidarity in the biggest sense. Not within groups that are already culturally and mentally cohesive — activist-speak solidarity — but across sharp boundaries. Solidarity with people you don't feel much in common with based on common humanity, shared suffering and mutual interest. It is hard to know how to get this going — it won't be possible over the internet which favors echo chambers and antagonism.

The corruption and cruelty modeled by those in power is encouraging sloppy individual bad behavior. Perhaps a response is to be extra compassionate in traffic, in communal houses, in collectives, in families, to folks on the street or at the store. A time of collapse and instability is not the time to tear up our personal bonds when we need them as strong as possible. Experiencing and expressing gratitude for things that are still good rather than focusing on resentment and shit-talking is personally healing and socially helps nurture resilient and empowered communities.

Early in the pandemic lockdown as commerce was put on hold, local and grassroots community, solidarity, and mutual aid suddenly re-emerged. Despite the unfortunately named social distancing, I began feeling closer to those around me than I had before. There were people spontaneously singing and dancing in the streets all over the place. And while a lot of things went online, a lot more people around here are still walking on the streets and often saying hi. A lot has happened since the early days of the lockdown, but that wide collective feeling is something to hold on to, build upon, and harness.

The constant dislocations of the pandemic, economic meltdown, rightwing attacks, wildfires and general chaos are not the revolution we imagined, but we need to recognize moments of rapid and dramatic change when they happen, seize on them, and turn them into something positive.

# TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE POLICE


BLM
no matter your age or documentation status you have constitutional rights
right to remain silent
to a lawyer
&
protection against unreasonable search & seizure

These suggestions from the National Lawyers Guild "Know Your Rights" guide summarize the rules to which the police are theoretically subject. However be careful: the police, the courts, and the government can and do manipulate and ignore these rules. Police often retaliate against people for exercising their rights. These tips may help you later on in court, and sometimes they won't. It's best to know your rights so you can decide when to assert them, even though the state can't be counted on to follow its own laws. Always use your best judgment — if you aren't doing anything wrong, there may be no reason to be excessively paranoid or escalate a potentially innocent and brief encounter with a police officer. The point is to avoid giving information.

Providing this information isn't intended to scare you into inactivity or make you paranoid. Even in the current context, the vast majority of radical projects proceed with no interference from the police. The police hassle and arrest people because they hope that such repression will frighten the population into submission. We can take reasonable precautions while continuing the fight for liberation.

## never talk to the police

Anything you say to an FBI agent or cop can and will be used against you and other people — even if the questions seem routine or harmless. You don't have to talk to FBI agents, police or investigators on the street, if you've been arrested, or if you're in jail. (Exceptions: Your name, date of birth and address are known as "Booking questions" which are not included in your right to remain silent. In some states you can get an additional minor charge for refusing to identify yourself after a police stop based on reasonable suspicion). Only a judge has the authority to order you to answer questions. Many activists have refused to answer questions, even when ordered by a judge or grand jury, and subsequently served jail time to avoid implicating others. It is common for the FBI to threaten to serve you with a grand jury subpoena unless you talk to them. Don't be intimidated. This is frequently an empty threat, and if they are going to subpoena you, they will do so anyway. If you do receive a subpoena, call a lawyer right away.

Once you've been stopped or arrested, don't try to engage cops in a dialogue or respond to accusations. If you are nervous about simply refusing to talk, you may find it easier to tell them to contact your lawyer. Once a lawyer is involved, the police sometimes back off. Even if you have already answered some questions, you can refuse to answer other questions until you have a lawyer. Don't lie to the police or give a false name— lying to the police is a crime. However, the police are allowed to lie to you, in fact they are trained to — don't believe what they say. If you've been arrested, don't talk about anything sensitive in police cars, jail cells or to other inmates — you are probably being recorded.

Keep in mind that activists who spend all their time worrying about security measures and police surveillance will end up totally isolated and ineffective because they won't be able to welcome new folks who want to join the struggle. We have to be aware of the possibility of police surveillance while maintaining our commitment to acting openly and publicly. The changes we seek will require mass movements as well as secretive covert actions by a small groups of your trusted friends.

## what to do about police harassment on the street

If the police stop you on the street, ask, "Am I free to go?" If yes, walk away. If not, you are being detained but this does not necessarily mean you will be arrested. Ask, "Can you explain why you are detaining me?" To detain you, cops must have specific reasons to suspect you have committed or about to commit a crime. Police are entitled to pat you down during a detention. If the police try to further search you, your car, or your home, say repeatedly that you do not consent to the search, but do not physically resist.

## what to do if police stop you in your car

If you are stopped while driving a car, you must show police your license, registration and proof of insurance, but you do not have to consent to a search or answer questions. Keep your hands where the police can see them and refuse to consent (agree) to a search. Police may separate passengers and drivers from each other to question them, but no one has to answer any questions.

## common sense activist measures

Don't speculate on or circulate rumors about protest actions or potentially illegal acts. Assume you are under surveillance if you are organizing mass direct action, anything illegal, or even legal stuff. Resist police disruption tactics by checking out the authenticity of any potentially disturbing letter, rumor, phone call, or other form of communication before acting on it. Ask the supposed source if she or he is responsible. Deal openly and honestly with the differences in our movements (race, gender, class, age religion, sexual orientation, etc.) before the police can exploit them. Don't try to expose a suspected agent or informer without solid proof. Purges based on mere suspicion only help the police create distrust and paranoia. It generally works better to criticize what a disruptive person says and does without speculating as to why.

People who brag about illegal activities, make reckless proposals, or ask for unnecessary information about underground groups may be undercover police but even if they are not, they should be treated with extreme caution. The police may send infiltrators/provocateurs posing as activists to entrap people on conspiracy charges of planning illegal acts. You can be guilty of conspiracy just for agreeing with one other person to commit a crime even if you never go through with it — all that is required is an agreement to do something illegal and a single "overt act" in furtherance of the agreement, which can be a legal act like going to a store. It is reasonable to be suspicious of people in the scene who pressure us, manipulate us, offer to give us money or weapons, or make us feel like we aren't cool if we don't feel comfortable with a particular tactic, no matter why they do these things. Responsible activists considering risky actions will want to respect other people's boundaries and limits and won't want to pressure you into doing things you're not ready for. Doing so is coercive and disrespectful — hardly a good basis on which to build a new society or an effective action.

For more info contact the National Lawyers Guild: 415 285-5067 or 212 679-5100; read The War at Home by Brian Glick or Agents of Repression by Ward Churchill

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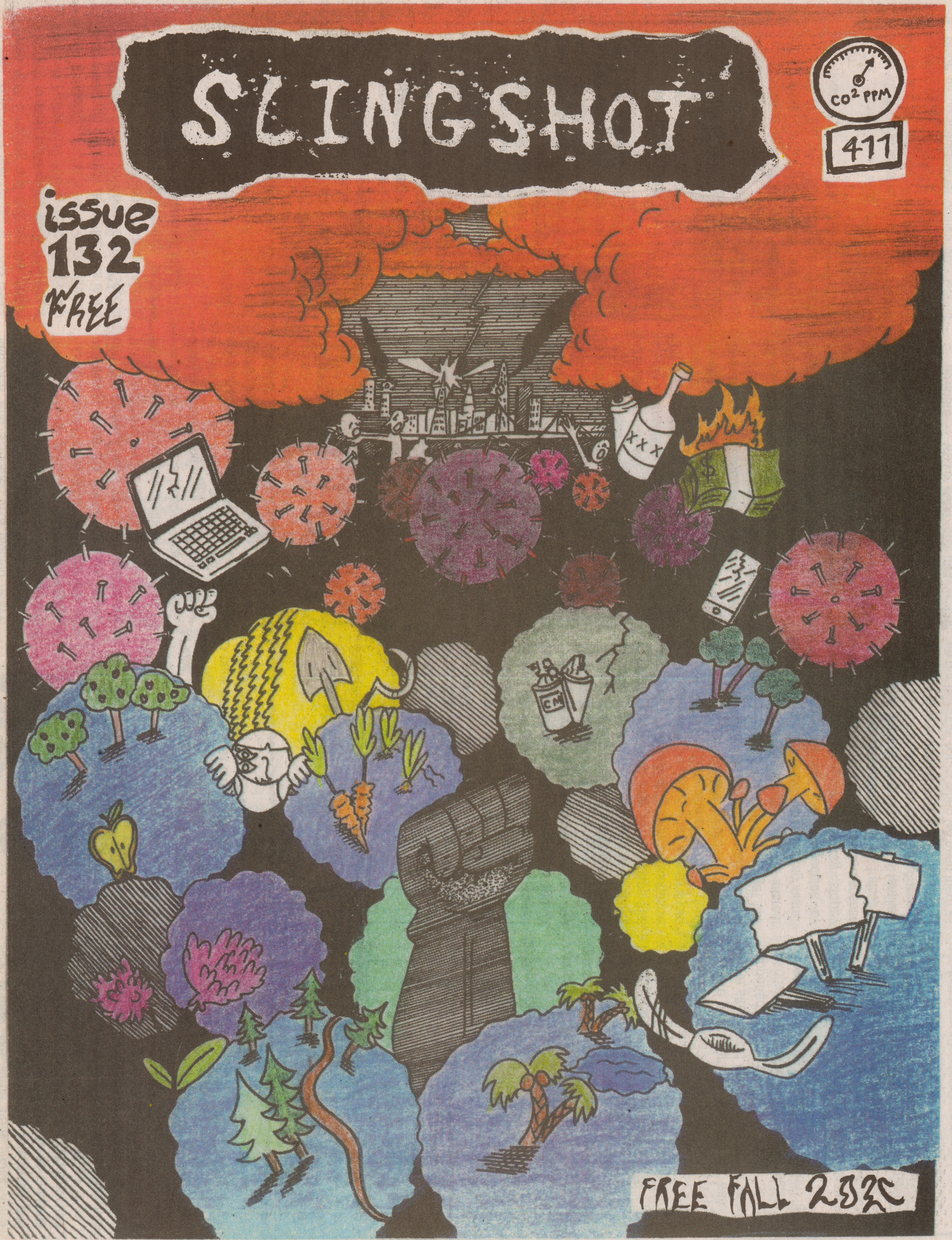
# SLINGSHOT

issue 132
FREE



FREE FALL 2020